



EAST GRAND RAPIDS

2018 Master Plan



MKSK



AMNA P. SEIBOLD
MAYOR

CITY OF
EAST GRAND RAPIDS

750 LAKESIDE DRIVE SE • EAST GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49506
(616) 949-2110 www.eastgr.org

June 2018

Dear Residents:

On behalf of the Planning Commission and City Commission, we are pleased to present this comprehensive Master Plan document outlining our vision for the future of East Grand Rapids.

This document is the result of many months of citizen input, formal and informal discussions, studies, research, painstaking attention to detail and an overall desire to develop a far-reaching map for the road ahead.

All of the suggestions and recommendations contained in this plan are concepts and will need additional research by staff and consultants, input from involved citizens and lengthy discussions among elected and appointed officials. Some of the concepts and ideas will be implemented, some will be altered, and some may not be right for our community. In some cases, changes may need to be made to the city's ordinances. In all situations, the residents of East Grand Rapids will have a voice in the discussions.

Thank you to all who were involved in the development and perfecting of this document. The participation of so many truly make East Grand Rapids "A Better Place to Live."



Amna P. Seibold
Mayor

Acknowledgements

PREPARED FOR

City of East Grand Rapids
Winter/Spring 2018

This document was made possible through Commission meetings, public workshops, and meetings with City Staff. A special thank you to the valuable residents and business owners for their thoughtful input during this process.

City Commission

Amna Seibold, Mayor
Brian Miller, President
Chad Zagel
Katie Favale
Diana Schad
Claudine Duncan
Karey Hamrick
Jeff Dills
Bryan Walters

City Staff

Brian Donovan, City Manager
Doug LaFave, Assistant City Manager
John Huff, City Attorney

Planning Commission

John Barbour, Chair
Tom Getz, Vice Chair
John Arendshorst
Kevin Brant
David deVelder
Jeff Dills
Mary Mapes
Brian Miller
Jeff Olsen



CITY OF
EAST GRAND RAPIDS

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**RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION
2018 EAST GRAND RAPIDS MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, Act 33, Public Acts of Michigan 2008, as amended, provides for a City Planning Commission to prepare and recommend adoption of a master plan, and amendments thereto, for the physical development of the City; and,

WHEREAS, the East Grand Rapids Planning Commission has prepared the 2018 Master Plan for the City of East Grand Rapids, in compliance with Act 33; and,

WHEREAS, The East Grand Rapids City Commission has passed a resolution asserting the City Commission's right to adopt the Master Plan and all elements and amendments of that Plan, as allowed by Act 33; and,

WHEREAS, East Grand Rapids distributed the draft Master Plan to the county board of commissioners and the planning commissions of surrounding units of government, and all other relevant agencies for review and comment in compliance with Act 33; and,

WHEREAS, the East Grand Rapids Planning Commission held a properly noticed public hearing on the draft Master Plan on May 22, 2018, in accordance with the requirements of Act 33 and other applicable State statutes; and,

WHEREAS, at the public hearing held on May 22, 2018, the citizens of East Grand Rapids were afforded the opportunity to provide oral and written comments on the draft Plan amendments; and,

WHEREAS, the East Grand Rapids Planning Commission has adopted a motion by a majority vote of its membership recommending adoption of the Plan to the City Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the East Grand Rapids City Commission does hereby adopt the 2018 East Grand Rapids Master Plan, to be dated as adopted this 4th day of June 2018.

CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION:

Offered by Commissioner Miller; supported by Commissioner Walters

Yeas: Commissioners Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Miller, Walters, Zagel and Mayor Seibold
Nays: None
Absent: None

Resolution Declared Adopted By:



Mayor



City Clerk

June 4, 2018
Date of Adoption

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

This Master Plan is a guide for the City's physical development. It addresses both public space (streets, parks, civic buildings and other land under city control) and private property.

While the Plan contains background information about demographic and economic trends, land use patterns, and community character, the heart of the Plan is the policy framework. Policies are focused around specific goals and actionable items, and a future land use map and zoning recommendations.

Master Plan Framework

This document refreshes the previous plan, addressing the changes in the City and offering ideas for new opportunities. The Plan is the result of a technical assessment by community planning experts, coupled with widespread input from city officials, representatives of the business community, and the public.

For city properties, including city buildings, parks and streets, the Master Plan provides an overall framework for future infrastructure investments in streets and future land use. This Master Plan also incorporates, by reference, the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which is a separate document that is frequently updated. Together, these planning tools provide a strategic foundation for the City's annual Capital Improvement Plan. Recommendations are also provided to amend the zoning ordinance to address changes and support Plan implementation.

In terms of privately-owned land, the Master Plan defines a recommended pattern for the of land uses by type. These include: single family residential, varying forms of multiple family residential, offices, commercial uses, and quasi-public uses like churches and schools. These land use recommendations

define the City of 20 years or more into the future and serve as the basis for local zoning decisions.

However, as a largely built-out community, most of East Grand Rapid's land use pattern is well established. Therefore, the Plan largely focuses on sustaining and enhancing the prized character of the community. Proposed changes to existing land use patterns are confined to a few specific areas and limited to infill and redevelopment within those areas, rather than sweeping new directions. Other than specifically called out land use changes, the Plan promotes the continuation of the established land use patterns in East Grand Rapids.

East Grand Rapid's most recent Master Plan was adopted in 1999, with amendments in 2006 that concentrated on Gaslight Village. The 1999 Master Plan focused on the new millennium and how East Grand Rapids could be improved and sustained as a fully developed city with exemplary neighborhoods, schools, and quality of life. Many of the recommendations of those plans have been implemented. This Master Plan amendment retains the foundational elements of the previous Plan, but with a fresh look at quality of life, economy--including e-commerce--housing preferences and multi-modal transportation.

In the first two decades of the new millennium, technology, economy, and culture have changed considerably. While everyday life has evolved -- from commutes to shopping and communication preferences, the goals of the East Grand Rapids community, as stated in Master Plan updates, have generally remained consistent. For example, one of the fundamental goals of the 1982 East Grand Rapids Master Plan was:

"To create a community atmosphere that reinforces the residential character and the high standards of excellence that have come to be the symbols of East Grand Rapids."

In meetings with City departments, Planning Commission, business community, and public-at-large, it is clear this goal remains the foundational principle guiding East Grand Rapids.

As a vision for the future, the Master Plan must consider community strengths upon which to build.

Through a series of workshops, the most frequently cited assets included:

- ▶ Vibrant Neighborhoods
- ▶ Reeds Lake and The Parks
- ▶ Walkability
- ▶ Gaslight Village
- ▶ East Grand Rapids Public Schools
- ▶ Library and City Services
- ▶ Proximity to Employment and Other Destinations
- ▶ Spectrum Health Blodgett Campus

Retaining, strengthening, and building upon these assets is essential to the long-term sustainability of the community. While preservation and conservation of East Grand Rapids' resources are essential, this does not mean that no change will occur. East Grand Rapids needs to be flexible and adaptable to change, while preserving the essence and character that allows the City to prosper.

Therefore, the Master Plan focuses on the following:

- ▶ **Ensuring new development is compatible with the existing character of Gaslight Village and the City's neighborhoods**
- ▶ **Increasing the amount of attached residential to better meet attainable housing for all**
- ▶ **Continuing the city's enviable walkable network with added consideration for new facilities to make bicycle and foot travel a more convenient and safe choice**
- ▶ **Devising parking management strategies for Gaslight Village to address the current needs and accommodate future development, with an eye toward potentially dramatic changes in personal mobility (car share systems, information technology and autonomous vehicles)**
- ▶ **Attracting desired reinvestment and new development, at an appropriate scale in Gaslight Village**

CHAPTER II: COMMUNITY PROFILE

Historical Context

When planning for the future, it is helpful to first step-back and recall origins, history and evolution of a place. Early settlement in East Grand Rapids began in 1833, when the Reed family moved from New York State. Over time, more of the extended Reed family came and settled many areas-- from the first farm house near the intersection of Lake Drive and Rosewood to Manhattan Beach.

The area began to attract more families and became a farming community. Later, businesses came and expanded as the area began to attract a seasonal clientele. Seasonal visitors were primarily Grand Rapids residents who sought the relaxation and resort-like atmosphere of East Grand Rapids and its unique amenity, Reeds Lake. Water sports, amusement parks and picnic facilities were only a few of the offerings. East Grand Rapids came to be referred to as "Summer in Sin City", known for its recreational opportunities that also included road houses and gambling.

With the addition of a streetcar and public water utilities, the population began to grow rapidly. In 1926 East Grand Rapids was incorporated as a city. Over the years, the neighborhoods developed alongside expanding public infrastructure.

Since its development, Gaslight Village has remained the commercial core, but has experienced several evolutions.

At the turn of the millennium, the largest retail anchor, Jacobson's Department Store, closed, leaving a large empty building in the heart of the business district. Fortunately, a visionary proposal based on the City's Master Plan was embraced. This proposal included significant mixed-use development with new commercial

buildings integrated into the redeveloped streetscape. Midrise residential buildings were also proposed, but fell victim to the 'Great Recession' and have yet to be developed; however, they still have zoning approval to be built.

Adjacent to Gaslight Village is the Spectrum Health-Blodgett Campus (previously Blodgett Hospital). This health campus has also adapted and changed to fit healthcare needs of the community over the past 100+ years. Spectrum Health is committed to the revitalization of their East Grand Rapids campus as an outpatient and specialty service facility.

At first glance, the City's neighborhoods seem to be unchanged from the last several decades. However, there has been continuous renovation and improvements to homes to retain their aesthetic, functional and financial value. Similarly, the City has invested in improvements for streets, sidewalks, parks, and institutional buildings. Some examples include:

- ▶ Extensive streetscape improvements along Wealthy Street (also recommended in the past Master Plan). These improvements include street trees, wide sidewalks, bump outs, gaslights and a snow melting system;
- ▶ Continued investments in the pedestrian and park system including the pathway around Reeds Lake, upgrades to parks and sidewalk maintenance; and
- ▶ A major redesign of the City Hall/ Library Community Center on Reeds Lake, adjacent to the High School, John Collins Park, and Gaslight Village.

East Grand Rapids has evolved, reinvented itself, and responded to a variety of challenges and opportunities to retain its enviable position as one of Michigan's premier communities. Now, the lightning-fast pace of technology, changes in market preferences for both homes and shopping, and heightened health consciousness present a new set of considerations for the City's future:

- ▶ Technology has shaped how people move, shop, and communicate: Smart phones, online shopping, social media, Google and Google Maps have changed local and regional interactions, and mobility.
- ▶ Technological changes have led to a declining need for brick and mortar retail space. Now, stores tend to need smaller spaces and offer a wider variety of services.
- ▶ Niche retail has developed at Breton Village on the border of East Grand Rapids.
- ▶ The housing market has changed. Some young people have preference for "urban living" and rental units, rather than owning a home. Many active seniors (a growing market segment) are looking to stay in, or move to East Grand Rapids, but in a smaller home with less maintenance.
- ▶ Traveler information, in-vehicle technology and traffic signal technology can help ease traffic flow.
- ▶ New awareness of the health benefits of walking and bicycling is changing the way people travel. People are more willing to walk if the environment is perceived to be safe and comfortable, adding to the appeal of highly walkable communities like East Grand Rapids.
- ▶ Popular new attached residential along Bagley and Croswell has developed after such uses were identified in the City's previous Master Plan.

Demographics

East Grand Rapids is a small, affluent community compared to cities and townships locally and Michigan as whole. Income and home values are significantly higher than other parts of Kent County as well as the state. While Michigan's population is declining, Kent County and East Grand Rapids are both seeing a slight increase in population.

This demographic information can help guide policy changes in regards to economic development, housing, and land use. For example, East Grand Rapid's aging population means that new housing preferences and amenities in the City may be needed to accommodate a growing number of seniors. The above average home value and income of East Grand Rapids residents may influence retail preferences and demand for local jobs.

Housing Demographics - 2016

2016 Median Home Value



East Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids	Ada Township	Grand Rapids Township
\$303,400	\$113,600	\$300,300	\$226,000

2016 Median Household Income



East Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids	Ada Township	Grand Rapids Township
\$118,393	\$42,019	\$125,237	\$ 84,893

2016 Rent Vs. Home Ownership



East Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids	Ada Township	Grand Rapids Township
7.5% 92.5%	45.7% 54.3%	6.5% 93.5%	12.5% 87.5%

City, County, and State Comparison

	East Grand Rapids	Kent County	Michigan	
Population	11,297 10,734 10,764	629,352 599,432 574,335	9,909,600 9,952,687 9,938,444	2016 2010 2000
AGE	38.3 38.1 36.8	34.9 34 32.5	39.5 38.1 35.5	2016 2010 2000
Median Home Value	\$303,400 \$249,100 \$205,600	\$144,300 \$147,600 \$115,100	\$127,800 \$144,200 \$115,600	2016 2010 2000
Median Household Income	\$118,393 \$99,489 \$84,772	\$54,673 \$49,532 \$46,076	\$50,803 \$48,432 \$44,533	2016 2010 2000

People- 2016

2016 Population



East Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids	Ada Township	Grand Rapids Township
11,297	193,887	14,038	17,766

2016 Median Age



East Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids	Ada Township	Grand Rapids Township
38.3	31.1	40.5	42.4

Changes Over Time in East Grand Rapids

	2000	2010	2016
Population	10,764	10,734	11,297
Median House Value	\$205,600	\$249,100	\$303,400
Median Income	\$84,772	\$99,489	\$118,393

Existing Conditions

This section of the Plan covers a variety of existing conditions in East Grand Rapids including parks and open space, land use, and transportation.

Natural Features

The City's prominent natural features have greatly influenced the location, type, and quality of the development for which East Grand Rapids is so well known. Most notable of the natural features, Reeds Lake, is the larger of two lakes within the heart of the City. Its nearly 283 acres, affords residents and visitors with a unique recreational amenity, as well as a prized aesthetic feature. While most of its shore is bordered by large homes, the west end of the lake features one of the City's most popular parks, the City's municipal offices and library, and a popular restaurant. In addition, the lake's juxtaposition with the Gaslight Village District allows for interaction between both features.

Less well-known and visible, Fisk Lake is a smaller, private lake surrounded by single family homes and almost entirely hidden from public view. A small, shallow channel connects Fisk and Reeds Lakes. A smaller channel, located at the northwest side of Fisk Lake, ultimately drains into the City of Grand Rapids. In general, areas north and south of Reeds Lake rise dramatically and form hills and bluffs that provide exceptional home sites, as well as, scenic recreational opportunities.

In addition to the two lakes, significant wetlands and natural woodlands are found along the north and east ends of Reeds Lake. Hodenpyl Woods and Remington Park provide nearly 43 acres of wooded preserve located north of Reeds Lake. The tract is a dedicated natural area and as such, is protected from development that may put its fragile plant and animal life at risk. Other than a trail system through the area, no other recreational development has been permitted.

The City's tree-lined streets provide the natural environment most easily seen and interacted with by residents daily. In most neighborhoods canopies of mature trees frame the streets, adding to the stately character of this residential community. Conservation of these natural features remains a tenet of the City's Master Plan.

Community Facilities and Services

East Grand Rapids has an impressive array of community facilities and services for a city of its size. These include excellent schools, a joint City Hall and Library Campus, the Reeds Lake Trail, John Collins Park, the Department of Public Works Complex, and many other parks and natural open space.

Since the City Hall and Library campus was updated, it has been quite successful in creating a family-oriented and civically engaged public gathering place for everyone in the community to enjoy and learn.



City Hall and Library Campus

Among the excellent community facilities the City provides, the parks, open space, and pathways in East Grand Rapids remain paramount to the quality of life residents enjoy. This Plan supports the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which is a separate document that is updated frequently and contains specific improvements for parks and open space. The most recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2011) supports the following goals:

- ▶ Provide recreational opportunities and programs for East Grand Rapids residents of all ages and abilities.
- ▶ Continue cooperation between the schools and City with the joint facilities agreement.
- ▶ Optimize the community-wide opportunities for improved access to the Reeds Lake frontage.
- ▶ Improve and define the Reeds Lake Trail for recreational use and non-motorized transportation linkages throughout the community.
- ▶ Preserve and protect the city's natural resources and habitats.
- ▶ Appropriately utilize the natural areas owned by the City.
- ▶ Utilize existing available land to reduce the existing acreage deficit in City-wide community park facilities.
- ▶ Consider acquisition of additional properties.
- ▶ Consider additional recreational opportunities to respond to the needs of the community.
- ▶ Update facilities to meet the needs and expectations of City residents.

As detailed in the current Parks and Recreation Plan, the following parks and natural areas service East Grand Rapids:

MANHATTAN PARK

Manhattan Park is the largest of the City's parks (43 acres), providing a range of recreational opportunities and hosting many activities offered by the Parks and Recreation Department. Facilities include: a picnic shelter, playground, sand volleyball courts, softball diamonds, soccer field, tennis courts, nature trails, sledding during the winter and a natural area with rustic trails.

WATERFRONT PARK

Waterfront Park, located on the west shores of Reeds Lake, includes six acres of recently developed lakefront and 11 acres of undeveloped woodland and wetlands. The park provides universally accessible trails with boardwalks. The popular Reeds Lake Trail runs through the property. The park features a 425-foot floating boardwalk system, giving a unique perspective on the lakeshore environment.

HODENPYL WOODS

The property consists of wooded wetlands east and west of Reeds Lake Boulevard and is bounded by Remington Park to the south. The park features a 0.9-mile plant identification trail with several boardwalk crossings and a floating bridge. The trails are also popular with audobon and wildlife groups.

REMINGTON PARK

This recreation area is home to Swaney Field--the high school baseball field--along with a restroom facility used by baseball fans and trail users. There is also an undeveloped natural area bordering Hodenpyl Woods, which accounts for more than half of the park's acreage.



Reeds Lake



Reeds Lake at Waterfront Park

GRIFFITHS PARK

This small area of natural mature woodland is off Reeds Lake Boulevard. It is currently undeveloped for recreational use except for a paved pathway and benches to rest and enjoy nature. The path connects to the Reeds Lake Trail. The tree canopy consists largely of Cottonwood with some Maple and Elm.

JOHN COLLINS PARK

John Collins Park is located on Lakeside Drive between the Grand Rapids Yacht Club and Rose's Restaurant. The park was renovated in 2002 and features a public access boat launch to Reeds Lake, a lakeshore walk, overlook and fishing decks, benches, gardens, picnic tables, event space/plaza and public restrooms.

STEKETEE WOODS

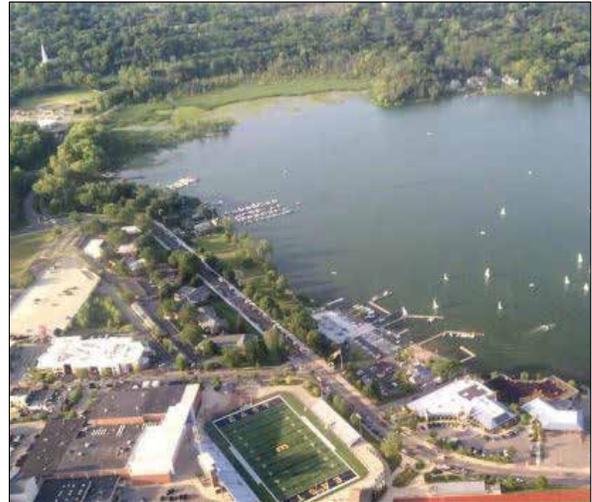
Steketee Woods is an undulating parcel of undeveloped land with approximately 100 linear feet of frontage on the north shore of Reeds Lake. The property was donated to the City with the understanding that the property would remain largely in its natural state. The property consists of mature woodlands on the upland areas, with wetlands along the lakeshore.

SCHROEDER PROPERTY

This property was donated to the City of East Grand Rapids by the Schroeder family. It is located on the south side of Reeds Lake Boulevard, adjacent to the Hodenpyl Woods property. The land is currently undeveloped and features an open grass area with some mature trees. Newly planted flowers have also attracted butterflies to the area.



Movie Under The Stars at John Collins Park



East Grand Rapids High, John Collins Park, Grand Rapids Yacht Club, and Waterfront Park in the distance.



John Collins Park

City/School Joint Facilities

Through a somewhat unique agreement, all city and school properties are considered joint facilities for use by both organizations. By working together to pool land and financial resources, high quality athletic fields and parks are available on various City and school properties for use by all residents and visitors.

Public Safety

The East Grand Rapids Department of Public Safety was established in 1985 by combining the city's police and fire departments into one organizational entity. All sworn officers in the East Grand Rapids Department of Public Safety are cross-trained as law enforcement officers, firefighters, and medical first responders.

Public Works

The Public Works Department is comprised of two divisions: Administration and Engineering Services Division and the Operations Division. The Administration and Engineering Services division operates and maintains:

- ▶ Design and construction of City roads and sidewalks;
- ▶ Streetlights and traffic engineering
- ▶ Water distribution system, and sanitary / storm sewer systems;
- ▶ Municipal buildings;
- ▶ Building permits, zoning administration, property maintenance code and planning review;
- ▶ City trees and lake and environmental programs; and
- ▶ Community Service Worker program (CSW)

The Operations Division maintains and fixes:

- ▶ Street and sidewalk maintenance;
- ▶ Forestry;
- ▶ Public utilities operations and maintenance;
- ▶ Yard waste collection service;
- ▶ Vehicle fleet maintenance; and
- ▶ Winter street and sidewalk maintenance

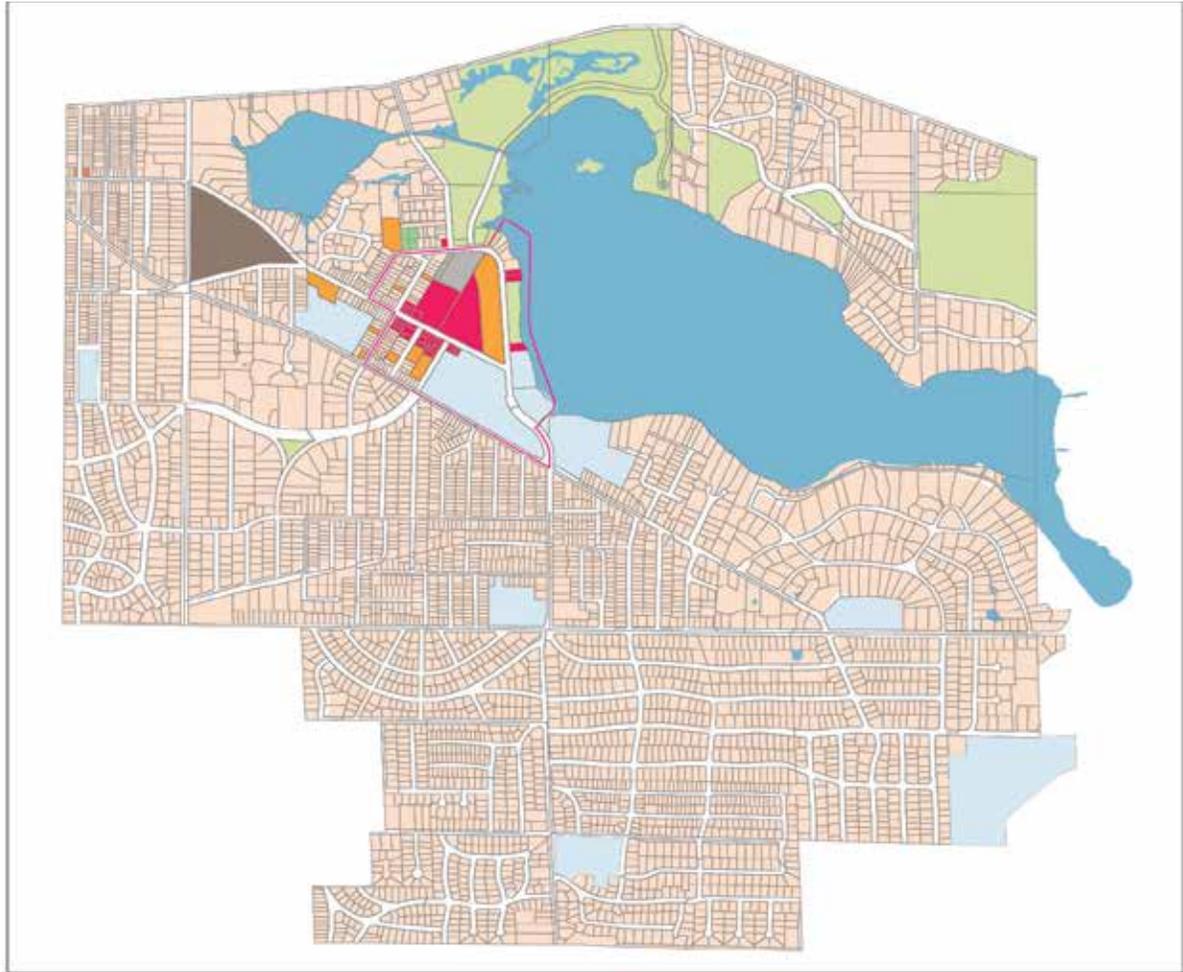
Existing Land Use

Understanding the established land use patterns throughout the community is an essential component to a Master Plan. It provides a graphic survey of how land is being used and demonstrates patterns of development and relationships.

As a mature, built-out city, most of East Grand Rapids is developed, with a few scattered lots available for infill development, as shown on the Land Use Map on the following page. The largest area currently undeveloped is along the north side of Gaslight Village. This site formerly consisted of medical office space before it was cleared and approved as part of an overall mixed-use development within Gaslight Village. While the commercial redevelopment occurred along Wealthy Street, the residential component was stalled due to the recession in the mid-2000s.

Other redevelopment opportunities, such as renovations to existing homes and some potential replacement of obsolete buildings, exist in some locations. Spectrum Health and the East Grand Rapids Public Schools continue to make investments on their campuses to meet community needs. The Plan's future land use policies focus on maintaining and improving existing uses while encouraging appropriate redevelopment of certain sites. The overall goal is to protect the residential character of the community and quality of life. This

East Grand Rapids Existing Land Use Plan



LEGEND

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| Single Family | Gaslight Village (see separate plan) |
| Multi Family | Health Campus |
| Commercial | Office |
| Park Space | Institutional |

Master Plan specifically has 5 land use categories: single-family residential, multi-family residential, commercial, mixed use institutional, and medical (health campus).

Residential

Most of East Grand Rapids is occupied by single family homes within distinctive, well-maintained neighborhoods that exhibit a variety of aesthetic and size options. Housing styles range from modest frame ranches and colonials to grand homes made of brick

and cut stone. While the housing stock is mostly comprised of older homes, these homes are largely well-maintained. Where isolated signs of neglect have existed, homes have been rebuilt, remodeled, or removed to prevent negative influences on surrounding neighborhoods.

Schools

Schools are an important component of the institutional uses offered in the city, which provide a variety of community services beyond primary education, including the array of recreational amenities within the City. Two institutions of higher education, Calvin College and Aquinas College, are located partially within and adjacent to the City.

HEALTHCARE

Access to quality health care is one of the key components of a highly-rated livable city. East Grand Rapids is fortunate to have a top-tier healthcare institution in the heart of the city. Spectrum Health's Blodgett Campus' is an institutional use and provides a variety of healthcare services.

Spectrum Health's Blodgett Campus is about one-quarter mile west of Gaslight Village. Current buildings on the healthcare campus date back to 1916 and 1923 with significant expansion occurring in the 1960's, 70's and 2000's. Continued investment in the campus is evidence of Spectrum's commitment to the facility and to East Grand Rapids.

Once Blodgett Hospital joined the Spectrum Health Group, in-patient care was shifted to the main Spectrum Health Campus in downtown Grand Rapids. Non-trauma ambulatory and outpatient services, along with some highly specialized services and physician offices became the focus at the East Grand Rapids campus.



Spectrum Health-Blodgett Campus

Gaslight Village Land Use

COMMERCIAL

Commercial uses are confined to the business core, Gaslight Village, a combination neighborhood shopping district, downtown, and gathering place.

This hub forms a distinct commercial area west of Reeds Lake. Uses range from neighborhood conveniences (grocery, dry cleaners, pharmacy, etc.) to boutique, high-end retail and a variety of eateries. Immediately northwest of the Gaslight Village core is a pocket of small office buildings tucked amid a mostly residential area of Greenwood Avenue.

There is a non-conforming office space along Greenwood Avenue in a single-family residential zone in Gaslight Village. In addition there is an antique store located at the corner of Reeds Lake Boulevard and Greenwood Avenues. This former home was granted a use variance many years ago.

RESIDENTIAL

Most of the multi-family residential in the City is centered in and around Gaslight Village, where two apartment and condominium complexes abut the business district (on the east side, overlooking Reeds Lake). There is also a townhome development along Greenwood Street. While Lovett between Lake Drive and Wealthy has been planned for multi-family for several years, the block has remained single family with the exception of a duplex at 658 Lovett Street. Smaller multiple-family buildings sit on former single-family residential lots along Bagley and Lovett. Those were developed following a previous master plan update. There is also one non-conforming multiple family apartment building located at the corner of Lake Drive and Lovett Avenue.

The Grand Rapids Yacht Club is zoned single-family residential and operates as a non-conforming use.

Transportation

East Grand Rapids bustles with people moving by car, bicycle, boat, and foot. This section summarizes the existing transportation system in the City.

Walkability

The most common word used to describe East Grand Rapids throughout the public input process was “walkable”. Walkability has long been one of the most notable features of living in East Grand Rapids. Sidewalks along residential streets and pathways around Reeds Lake are highly traveled. Aspects such as wide sidewalks, a snowmelt system that keeps walks clear in winter, good lighting, aesthetically designed store frontages, street trees to provide shade, and benches combine to create a pleasant walking experience in Gaslight Village. Gaslight Village is also in walking distance from many residential areas of East Grand Rapids, as well as schools, Spectrum Health-Blodgett Campus and Reeds Lake.

The city has made major investments in the sidewalk system. Still there are places where improvements were suggested during the Master Plan Process to make walking more convenient.

Continued improvements to make walking a convenient and safe choice are described in “The Plan” section.



Existing Condition: Safe pedestrian crossing

Bicycle Facilities

Bicycling has grown as a form of transportation in East Grand Rapids; many students choose to bike to school and families travel by bike around the community.

Existing accommodations for bicycles in East Grand Rapids are limited, but include some of the following:

- ▶ Bike lanes on both sides of Wealthy Street between the west city limit with Grand Rapids connect to Gaslight Village.
- ▶ The Reeds Lake Trail, a 4.2-mile loop consisting of sidewalks, off-street paths, and some on-street segments.
- ▶ Streets designed for lower speeds, which are safer for bicycles and pedestrians.

During public workshops, some residents and representatives of bicycle advocacy groups commented that there is a need for added bicycle facilities.

Transit

East Grand Rapids is one of six core cities that agreed to support regional transit service in 1978 through the creation of the Grand Rapids Area Transit Authority. In 2000, those six cities established the Interurban Transit Partnership with dedicated funding and a millage. This partnership is now known as “The Rapid” and provides services to East Grand Rapids residents.

Two bus routes directly serve the City, connecting residents to downtown Grand Rapids and Woodland Mall. Both routes also offer the opportunity to transfer at Woodland Mall to the route serving Gerald R. Ford International Airport.

In 2018, both routes through East Grand Rapids operate on 15-minute headways during the weekday peak periods, offering fairly frequent service during the morning and afternoon rush.

- ▶ Route 5: Wealthy/Woodland begins service at the Grand Rapids Amtrak Station (Central Station) on the southern end of downtown and travels east along Wealthy Street to Fuller Avenue, weaving through the southwestern edge of East Grand Rapids. Route 5 offers less frequent service on weekday evenings and Saturdays, changing to 60-minute headways, and does not operate on Sundays.
- ▶ Route 6: Eastown/Woodland also begins service at Central Station, connects to Gaslight Village and turns around at Woodland Mall. Route 6 operates on 30-60 minute headways on weekday evenings and weekends, including Sundays.

Beginning in 2018, all buses will be equipped with a new electronic fare payment system called “The Wave.” This new system will allow passengers to pay their bus fare using a smart card or mobile ticketing smartphone app, making fare payment easier, faster, and more convenient. Additionally, all buses are equipped with racks to hold two to three bicycles, allowing for more seamless connections for passengers accessing transit by bicycle.

The Rapid’s Transit Master Plan was adopted in 2010. This 20-year vision for the future of transit service in the Greater Grand Rapids region proposed service improvements, as well as potential new services including bus rapid transit (BRT), modern streetcar service in downtown Grand Rapids, and a regional express bus service. In 2017 and 2018, East Grand Rapids representatives were involved in an update to the Transit Master Plan.

Transit stop amenities such as benches and shelters should be reviewed by The Rapid to encourage ridership.



Transit Routes Source: (www.therapid.org)

Traffic

Traffic volumes throughout the City have been generally consistent over the last few decades. It is expected that most streets in East Grand Rapids will remain at a level that traffic engineers define as within the “acceptable” range. Generally, there is ample capacity to absorb future development within the capacity of the streets. However, for larger development projects, the City requires a traffic impact study to identify potential improvements that may be needed.

The City monitors traffic, crashes, and physical condition of pavement along with utility conditions through asset management plan principals to identify and prioritize where street improvements are needed. Upgrades to signal technology to smooth traffic flow and improve safety are also part of the city’s evaluation process.

Parking in Gaslight Village

As part of this Master Plan, a parking study was conducted to specifically look at parking in the commercial core of the City, Gaslight Village. This parking study uncovered important trends and existing conditions which assisted in developing the parking management goals and actions detailed later in this Plan. A summary of the results follows:

PARKING CAPACITY IN GASLIGHT VILLAGE IS MUCH GREATER THAN THE DEMAND –

Current demand for parking in Gaslight Village is accommodated by the existing parking supply. During the typical demand periods counted, the total parking supply was never more than 60% full. While this may not represent the peak-of-the-peak period in terms of parking demand, it is not good practice to design downtown parking for the peak-of-the-peak period.

Recommendations in this Plan focus on tactics for more efficient use of all the available parking spaces through wayfinding signs and coordinated management of the parking system.

ON-STREET PARKING FILLS UP FASTER THAN OFF-STREET

On-street parking is the most convenient (and most limited) place to park, which often means that it fills up first. The on-street parking in Gaslight Village was the most utilized of all the existing supply.

ON-STREET PARKING IN THE CORE (WEALTHY AND BAGLEY) IS MOST UTILIZED

The on street parking along Wealthy Street near the retail core experienced the most use during all count periods. This is due to the concentration of activity along Wealthy Street. As activity spreads throughout the district, demand for parking will follow. Parking management strategies can also be used to shift some of the demand from these prime spaces to other, less used spaces.

LUNCH-AFTERNOON DEMONSTRATED THE HIGHEST DEMAND

The weekday midday period exhibited the greatest total parking demand of all

periods counted, with 59% total utilization systemwide. It is important to note that even during this period, many facilities (including on-street parking) were under-utilized. The private development parking structure was only 34% occupied during this period.

TWO LARGEST (PRIVATE) FACILITIES ARE CONSISTENTLY UNDER-UTILIZED –

The Jade Pig parking structure and the D&W lot are the two largest facilities in the district, accounting for 426 total parking spaces, or 43% of the total parking in Gaslight Village. The D&W lot typically fills more than the Jade Pig structure (it is about half the size of the structure), but both facilities were consistently under-utilized (less than 60% occupied).

SCHOOL PARKING FACILITIES ARE NOT USED TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL DURING OFF-HOURS

While the parking lots at the high school are at capacity during school hours, they are under-utilized during evenings and weekends. The parking lot at the middle school is consistently under-utilized, even during school hours. These facilities provide a significant resource for accommodating additional parking demand. A formal, shared parking agreement between the City and the schools could open the lots for public parking when the schools are not in session.



Existing Conditions: On-street parking

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PARKING STRUCTURE

The parking occupancy counts included the Jade Pig parking structure in Gaslight Village that controls adjacent commercial and vacant properties, currently operated as a private parking facility. The parking structure exists, in part, to meet the parking required by zoning of the commercial development along the north side of Wealthy Street and an approved future residential development, but occupancy counts today reveal that it is consistently under-utilized. Typically, about 30% of spaces (primarily on the first level) are used. The remaining 70% could accommodate the still undeveloped residential units and the parking demand from the rest of Gaslight Village.

The Planned Unit Development agreement between the City and the owners of the structure ensure its continued availability for public parking.

It is also important to note that the structure is old and in declining condition, incurring increased maintenance costs to keep it safe and operational. If the facility was removed from the current parking inventory, 413 parking spaces would be lost. However, total parking utilization during the busiest period observed (59% system-wide on a weekday lunch period) would have been at 87% without the availability of the 413 spaces in the parking structure. From a parking management standpoint, 87% peak utilization is still within an acceptable range; therefore, it is possible to accommodate current parking demand for Gaslight Village without the parking structure and have spaces remaining.

To ensure parking utilization stays within an acceptable range, a shared parking agreement among the various parking lot owners would need to be put in place. In accordance with the PUD agreement with Jade Pig, the developer needs to utilize this parking structure for the development's retail and office building employees. If the parking structure is removed, the developer

would need to find an alternative solution that ensures they are still in compliance with their original PUD agreement.

Trends in Parking and Transportation

Mobility is a rapidly changing field. For example, an increasing number of people are traveling using rideshare services instead of driving. This can reduce demand for parking in lots, but increase activity of cars waiting along the curb. Nationwide, this change has led to new services like Uber, Lyft and bikeshare programs. Flexible work programs have altered the transportation status quo, impacting traffic flow and requiring different street configurations. East Grand Rapids, like other Cities, will experience changes in mobility related to these types of services.

Looking further in the future, it is expected that automated features within vehicles will continue to replace some driver responsibilities. One outcome of the evolution toward more "autonomous" vehicles will be that overall parking demand should decrease over time, but the amount of activity along the curbside will intensify. New trends in mobility may require new types of infrastructure and technology and are important to keep in mind for future planning efforts. Autonomous vehicles and ridesharing services could have a significant impact on the way we travel in the near future.

What does all of this mean for East Grand Rapids? It may mean there will be a gradual increase in the demand for waiting spaces along the curb. If autonomous vehicles begin to enter the fleet as expected, the City may need to invest in "Smart Community" technologies such as signal upgrades.

CHAPTER III: THE PLAN

Master Plan Goals

Through the active engagement of stakeholders and the community at large, a specific set of goals and priorities emerged. The overarching theme for these goals is the livability of East Grand Rapids, especially mobility, housing, and economic development. Recommendations in this plan are based on the following goals:

- ▶ East Grand Rapids should look to the future and continue to evolve itself and refine its services to remain a top choice for residents and businesses alike.
- ▶ Future land use and zoning decisions should include a focus on additional diverse housing opportunities for new families, aging in place, and young professionals.
- ▶ The city should continue to collaborate with the school district to maintain high quality schools to attract and retain families.
- ▶ Our streets and public spaces should continue to encourage walking and biking for better health and environmental quality.
- ▶ Gaslight Village should be positioned to adapt to the changing retail, business, and residential landscape while maintaining its character and walkability.

Citywide Plan

Land Use Plan

The majority of the City's current land uses are expected to stay the same so the residential character of East Grand Rapids will remain. On the following page, you will see the Future Land Use Plan. The map categories are the same land use designations as described in the existing Land Use Plan section on previous pages in this document. While most of the City is shown to remain "Single Family" that does not mean there will not be any change. The City supports reinvestment in homes including maintenance, renovation and eventual replacement. Any new homes should be designed to complement the character of the neighborhood and City overall.

There is also an enlarged version of the Future Land Use Map for Gaslight Village where several changes to the existing land use pattern are planned as described in the Gaslight Village Future Land Use section.

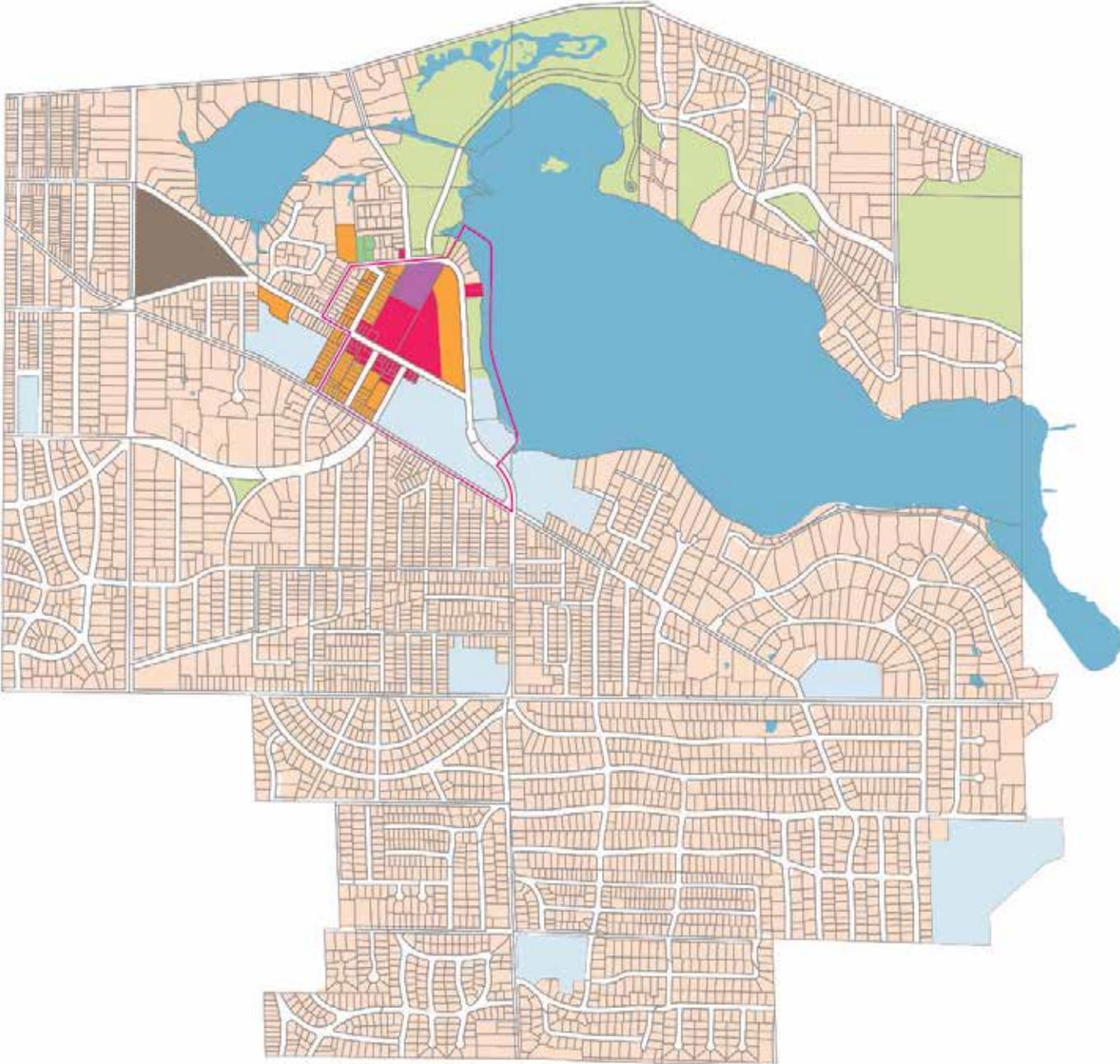
SPECTRUM HEALTH BLODGETT CAMPUS

This Master Plan supports the continued reinvestment in the campus to ensure its continued viability as an important element in the fabric of the community.

To ensure that new developments and remodeling are considerate of the surrounding neighborhood the following set design principles should be adhered to:

- ▶ Building or structure height, setback and materials should be consistent with the current site design or an architectural upgrade.
- ▶ Architecture should reflect the historic aspects of the hospital to the greatest extent possible.

East Grand Rapids Proposed Land Use Plan



LEGEND

- Single Family
- Multi Family
- Commercial
- Park Space
- Gaslight Village (see separate plan)
- Health Campus
- Office
- Institutional

- ▶ Lighting should meet the hospital’s needs for safety and security but should not create a nuisance.
- ▶ Setbacks and/or attractive landscape/screening should be used to reduce the visual impact especially to adjacent homes.
- ▶ To reduce circulation and traffic problems, the changes to campus design and hospital policies should encourage the use of transit, bicycling, or walking as an alternative to driving. This could include more covered bicycle parking near entrances, transit passes and programs to incentivize walking and bicycling.

Citywide Transportation Plan

Generally the street system in the City provides safe and efficient traffic flow. Streets designed to operate at low speeds are an important factor for vehicle and pedestrian safety. No significant changes are recommended. The City should continue maintenance and upgrading as new traffic technology continues to improve. Most streets in East Grand Rapids will stay the same; however, there are some non-motorized transportation considerations that East Grand Rapids as a whole, and especially in Gaslight Village, that are applicable.

WALKABILITY

One of the most valuable assets of East Grand Rapids expressed by residents is the walkability of the City, especially in Gaslight Village and around the lake. While there is already a pedestrian culture and a good sidewalk system, there are many ways that pedestrian travel can be enhanced.

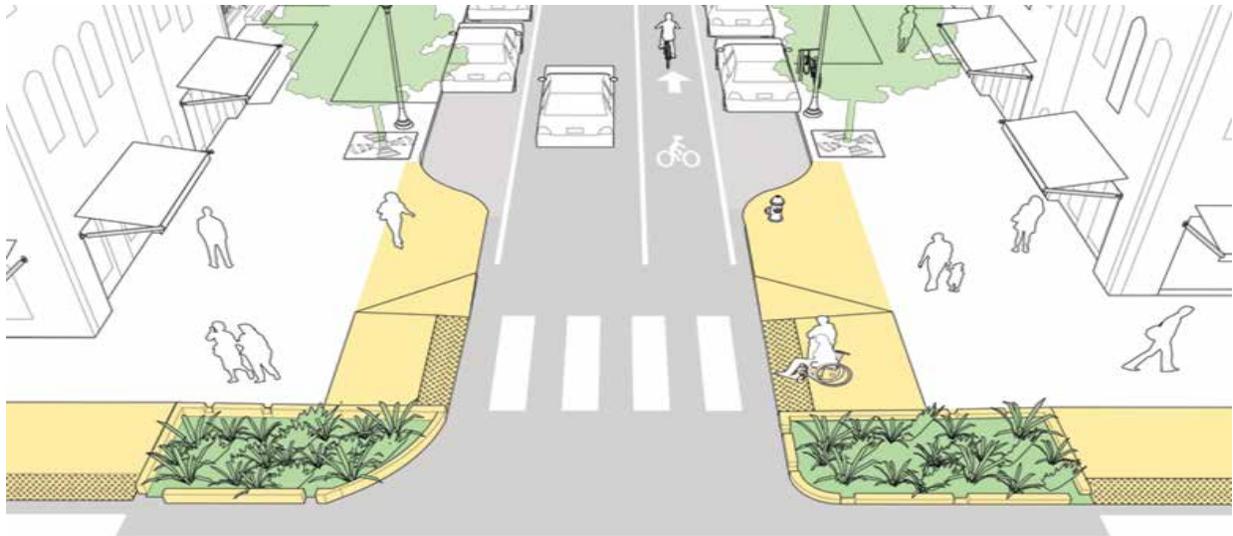
According to State law in Michigan, motorists are required to yield to pedestrians walking in a marked crosswalk. Compliance to this law has often proved to be a challenge, and can present potentially unsafe conditions for pedestrians.

Since 2015, MDOT has been experimenting with crosswalk signage and other tools to increase crosswalk awareness in Michigan communities. These low-cost measures have demonstrated significant improvements in motorist yielding behavior and pedestrian safety, and provided traffic calming effects (Michigan.gov). MDOT has since developed a guide for implementation of these treatments, which include features such as in-road pedestrian signs, pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions, and other physical design elements. The guide includes details regarding most effective methods for implementation of each element and potential installation costs.

It is recommended that East Grand Rapids test some of the treatments supported by MDOT to help improve pedestrian crossing locations in the city. The best designs for safe pedestrian crossings are those that are the most visible to motorists. Particular attention should be paid to implementing best practices for pedestrian infrastructure in Gaslight Village and near schools, where pedestrian traffic is greatest.

Many of the treatments recommended in the MDOT guide and have already been used in locations around East Grand Rapids. Traffic engineering review should be part of any consideration.

The City utilizes traditional published design manuals such as AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) which has long been the primary source for street design nationwide. But there are new consult “best practice” publications used by a growing number of Michigan Cities and even MDOT. that are more focused on the unique situations in cities. These guiding documents include “Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares” published by ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers) and a series of manuals published by the NACTO (National Association of City Transportation Officials). The City should use these manuals and case studies from similar cities as street projects are planned and designed in the future.



Curb extensions



Raised crosswalks



Median or pedestrian refuge island

Images source: NACTO

The following are recommended best practices for crosswalk design in East Grand Rapids:

- ▶ **Curb extensions:** an extension of the sidewalk into the parking lane at a crosswalk to create better visibility for pedestrians. Extensions should be 1-2 feet narrower than the parking lane and can be used at intersections or mid-block locations. They help to visually narrow the street.
- ▶ **Raised crosswalks:** similar to a speed hump or speed table; it raises the pedestrian crossing to the level of the sidewalk for better visibility and helps reduce vehicle speeds. These need to be designed to ease crossings by snow plows and fire trucks..
- ▶ **Median or pedestrian refuge islands:** concrete or planted island in the center of the roadway, typically located in combination with left-turn lanes to help to shorten crossing distances for pedestrians by offering a safe place to wait in the middle of the street. Medians also visually narrow the street for motorists, encouraging them to slow down. Narrowing streets provides for slower speeds which increases pedestrian and vehicle safety.

BIKEABILITY

The City is interested in encouraging bicycling as a mode of transport and to improve the health of residents. One of the ways to support this goal is to provide a safe and convenient network that appeals not only to those who already use a bicycle, but also less experienced bicyclists, families and children. Implementing a network of bicycle facilities can improve access to destinations such as parks, schools and adjacent communities.

One challenge for East Grand Rapids in terms of bicycle infrastructure updates is the limited right-of-way and curb-to-curb dimension available on existing streets. While some streets are too narrow for dedicated bicycle facilities, wider streets should be considered for dedicated bicycle facilities without removing on-street parking. The low-speed, low-volume nature of these streets provides the ideal

environment for bicyclists of all ages and abilities. These types of streets are well-suited for treatments that give priority to bicyclists and other non-motorized users, and traffic speeds should remain low. These treatments include facilities like bicycle boulevards and advisory bike lanes.

Bicycle boulevards are two-way, low-speed streets shared by bicyclists and motorists, often with on-street parking, designated by large pavement markings ("sharrows") that signal to motorists that bicyclists have priority on the street. Bicycle boulevards can be enhanced through bump-outs and other traffic calming elements that help to prioritize bicyclist movement over vehicular traffic.

Advisory bike lanes are also used on two-way, low-speed streets, but give a slightly higher priority to bicyclists than bicycle boulevards. Advisory bike lanes are dashed bike lanes that allow motorists and bicyclists to mix within the same space, but require motorists to yield to any bicyclists or oncoming traffic. These facilities are typically designed with a single-wide travel lane (12-16 feet) for two-way vehicular traffic with a dashed bicycle lane on either side (minimum 4 feet wide). Advisory bike lanes are currently allowed on an experimental basis, typically on streets with less than 6,000 vehicles a day that are not designated as bus or truck routes (Federal Highway Association: Bicycle Facilities and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices: Dashed Bicycle Lanes).



Bike boulevard example

Gaslight Village Plan

Gaslight Village Land Use

Gaslight Village is at the center of the potential land use changes recommended in this Plan. These potential changes are intended to help meet the goals of the Plan. These changes are described below. More dramatic changes to the design and arrangement of land use in the Village are illustrated later in this Plan.

SMALLER LOT SIZE

To help achieve attainable housing options for East Grand Rapids residents, the City could consider amending their zoning ordinance to allow for smaller lots in their R-3 single-family zoned areas within Gaslight Village. This would allow for incremental increases in housing density to the neighborhood while maintaining the residential characteristics already present in East Grand Rapids.

Smaller lot sizes would need to be designated on at least four R-3 lots in a row to make additional housing feasible. Currently, R-3 lots require a minimum lot width of 50 feet. To provide one additional house, the minimum lot width could be changed to 40 feet on five lots (i.e., four 50 foot lots equal five 40 foot lots).

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

This Master Plan supports the expanded designation of multi-family, attached residential land use on Lake Drive between Crowell and Bagley, for six lots (three on each side) along Wealthy Street west of Lovett Street and along Lovett Street north of Wealthy. The intent is that new attached/multiple family residential would be considered in these areas to help

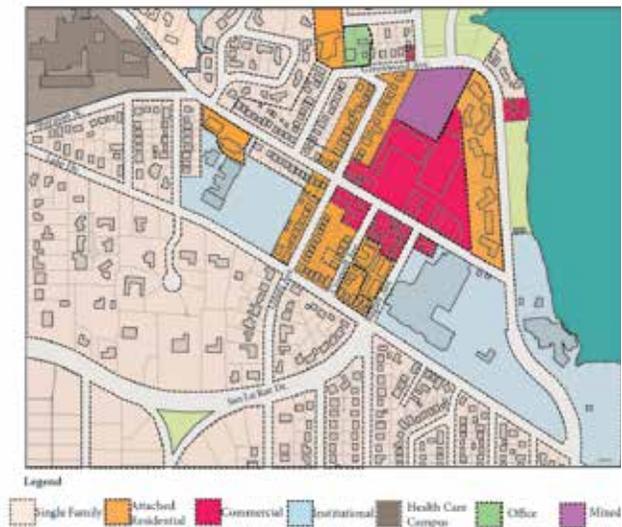
diversify the types of housing in the City. A slight increase in density would also support the businesses in Gaslight Village. Any new attached units should be designed with styles and architectural elements already found in the neighborhood. While attached townhomes may be appropriate, a variety of housing styles is preferred.

Attached multi-family residential land use would only be allowed if properties were rezoned to multiple family. Single-family residential housing will remain an allowable option on these lots, even if rezoned to multiple family.

Existing Land Use



Proposed Land Use



Gaslight Village Transportation

Motorized transportation recommendations for this Master Plan strategically focus on Gaslight Village as a district, especially its current and future parking needs.

PARKING MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

There is enough parking available to meet the present needs in Gaslight Village. While parking is sufficient, there are ways to make the current parking supply more efficient. Additionally, there are several recommendations to help ensure there is adequate parking to meet future needs as more development occurs in Gaslight Village. These recommendations are based on the 2017 Parking Study published as a separate document.

There are three types of city investments that can help utilize the existing parking supply more efficiently: parking occupancy counts, policies, programs and streetscape investments. Each category has a range of options that consider near-term, long-term, lower and higher cost solutions.

PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

To help implement parking management solutions and manage their efficiencies, routine parking occupancy counts should be conducted and analyzed. These counts, like counts that have been done in Gaslight Village in the past, should focus on typical weekdays, evenings, and Saturdays. Continued fresh data can determine changes in demand and trends over time and help guide parking management strategies, such as pricing or time-limits. Parking counts are more meaningful when changes occur to uses or new developments that may impact the supply.

PARKING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

To more efficiently use designated spaces, several policies could be implemented, including metered and time limits, valet zones and shared parking.

A shared parking policy program would entail encouraging parking lot owners to share their facilities with nearby uses. This may minimize the need for dedicated parking for every use. Shared off-street parking allows users to park once and visit multiple destinations, requiring less parking overall as each individual use no longer needs its own dedicated supply. For larger lots, this could be executed through a fund in which businesses pay an annual fee for customers to use off-site private parking.

Longer term, a parking authority could be developed to create and maintain shared parking. A parking authority can be established through private businesses or the City as a municipal entity. If the City were to establish the authority, it would require a public/private partnership to either acquire, lease or manage the existing private parking facilities in Gaslight Village. The authority would also have the ability to build new parking facilities in the future. This option will depend on the needs of future development or land use changes that may impact the current surplus supply.

Other parking considerations over time or as demand changes or intensifies may include:

- ▶ Valet parking for convenience and to keep more “prime” on-street parking spaces open to more users.
- ▶ Time limit enforcement to create efficient parking space turnover
- ▶ Charging for parking in high-demand areas to create efficient use of parking spaces, and as an enhanced layer to time limit enforcements.
- ▶ The school district could explore the use of a shuttle system for large events.

Long term, new residential or related land use should accommodate its own parking needs, but the required number of spaces could be reduced through the provision of alternatives such as designated spaces for car share vehicles or rideshare pickup.

Parking Capital Improvements

While parking policies are a major factor in improving parking supply efficiency, there are a few physical investments that can improve parking utilization as well. Many of the streets outside of the core retail strip in Gaslight Village that allow on-street parking do not have striped parking spaces. On Lakeside Drive, vehicles tend to be parked farther apart compared to spaces painted with specific dimensions. This change would increase the number of vehicles that can park on-street. Signage allowing boat trailers to take up more than one designated space may need to be installed or certain spaces should be designated for boat trailer use.

Additionally, a wayfinding system for parking could improve existing supply utilization. Signage should indicate where public parking is available and any time limit restrictions. Signs, and any web-based parking information should highlight alternatives to driving (e.g., signs that display “5-minute bike ride to library”, or “10 minute walk to the park”). There should also be an online interactive parking map that illustrates all

the parking options within Gaslight Village, including any restrictions, time limits, or costs to use those facilities. The online parking map should also highlight bicycle parking options.

A more long-term way of reducing parking demands is to invest in other modes of transportation. This includes building bike lanes, bike parking, pedestrian facilities, and transit amenities to encourage a shift to modes other than driving.

GASLIGHT VILLAGE BIKEABILITY

To encourage cycling as a form of transportation, certain infrastructure and treatments to streets should be considered.

Fortunately, most of the city’s streets are low-speed, low-volume residential streets where bicyclists can generally share the road with vehicles. Bicycling can be more stressful on some of the higher volume streets around Gaslight Village, like Lake Drive, Lakeside Drive and Wealthy Street. On those streets, special provisions for bicyclists can be considered such as sharrows, painted bike lanes or “protected” bike lanes where there is a physical separation between the bike lane and the travel lane. However, those types of facilities require 5-10 feet on each side of the street. The cross-section for many of these connector streets, such as Wealthy St. and Lake Dr. are 30 feet wide and include an 11-12 feet wide travel lane, and parking lanes (8-9 feet wide). Pavement on some of those

Below is an example of how Wealthy St. can accommodate a protected bicycle lane.



Existing Wealthy Street



Proposed Two-Way Bike Lane on Wealthy

streets could be reallocated to have two 10-11-foot-wide travel lanes with on-street 4-5-foot bike lanes on either side, or a two-way travel bicycle boulevard as shown below.

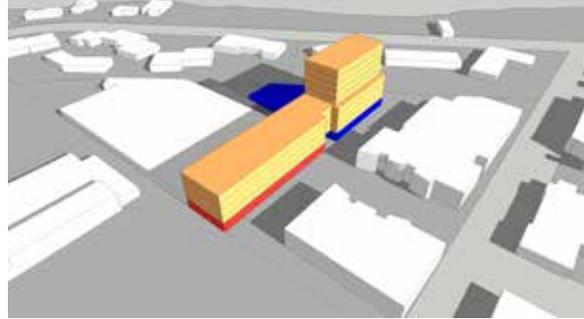
Gaslight Village Urban Design

To help inspire desired change, several urban design considerations have been visualized in Gaslight Village. These actions could be classified as milestone projects that help achieve the goals for Gaslight Village. Since much of what is illustrated would take place on private property, the intent is to indicate to the property owners the type and design that would best meet the Plan's objectives.

ACTION: ADDITIONAL MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT IN GASLIGHT VILLAGE

The vacant, private development site on the north side of Gaslight Village has remained fallow since the obsolete buildings were removed. While it has zoning approval for mid-rise residential condominiums the development has not yet occurred. This Plan suggests several options to create new mixed-use development. It is possible to reutilize the parking deck while also adding retail and residential opportunities to the existing structure. Alternatively, the potential exists to reuse a bulk of the parking garage and line it with active mixed-uses to terminate Bagley.

Ground floor retail and office could support residential, hospitality, or both while improving accessibility by car and foot in and out of the garage. An alternate street alignment would extend Bagley through the site to Reeds Lake Boulevard. This would unlock more of the site for development while improving the connectivity. In this scenario, a new shared-use surface parking lot could be built to support the development and the retail district.



Village Address Perspective



Village Address Perspective Land Use

To provide public parking to support continued reinvestments in the Village, the City could consider a public/private partnership for parking. A surface lot is much less expensive to build and maintain. If a street is constructed through the development as shown, it could be lined with parking spaces similar to Wealthy Street. Three specific concepts for redevelopment and alternative alignments to connect Wealthy to Lakeside are described on the following pages.

Mixed use, including ground floor office spaces with second floor residential may be considered for future change for boundary parcels between commercial and MFR to create a transitional zoning use. Mixed use zoning should not exceed one to two parcels as a buffer.

ACTION: POP-UP ACTIVITIES AT SURFACE PARKING LOT

Currently an underutilized surface parking lot, this area can be transformed into a pop-up activity and events center. This can activate the village core, support the local economy, and provide welcomed public space and pedestrian activity to the area. An out-parcel development (also known as “liner buildings”) has been recommended in previous City Plans and continues to have merit. To test the viability of increased development and the utility of having it, a pop-up performance park would activate the sidewalk while providing a space for farmers markets, a skating rink, vendor fairs, food events, biergartens, and music festivals. The programming of this space should deliberately test the viability of increased public space and specific uses that could occupy a more permanent structure in the future. If it is determined that this location does not work for certain “pop-up” events, other locations in the Gaslight Village area could be considered. These events could also be relocated if the desired buildings along the Wealthy frontage are constructed.



Existing parking lot



Proposed pop-up events on parking lot

ACTION: ENHANCE THE SENSE OF ARRIVAL IN GASLIGHT VILLAGE AT THE WESTERN ENTRY ON WEALTHY STREET.

Currently, there is no sense of arrival into Gaslight Village when you are entering from the west end. This is in part because of the lack of active uses as you enter Gaslight Village. To address the lack of welcoming gateway to Gaslight Village and provide the community with more recreational opportunities, the current Rite-Aid pharmacy location is one location that can be reimagined as an attractive new landmark multi-story building. This could be residential, mixed-use or a hotel combination. Whether at this location or elsewhere in Gaslight Village, a hotel will provide additional experiences in Gaslight Village, provide East Grand Rapids visitors with an overnight stay option with dining and other experiences after work and



Existing Condition



Proposed Condition

on weekends. A typical hotel with 100 or so rooms should have features like banquet and meetings rooms, which can add to the economic development of the Gaslight Village District.

ACTION: PEDESTRIAN LINK BETWEEN WEALTHY STREET AND REEDS LAKE

The Reeds Lake Trail currently exists as a combination of sidewalks, off-street paths and on-street segments. The East Grand Rapids community has expressed a desire to capitalize on this amenity by increasing the connectivity.

One potential option for a new connection is a link through Gaslight Village. This could be implemented through the construction of a new street or simply as a bicycle and pedestrian pathway. A new street could be constructed as part of a larger redevelopment of the Jade Pig site, connecting Bagley Avenue and Reeds Lake Boulevard through the Village.

Option 1 is the most direct and intuitive route. This option removes the parking garage and extends Bagley through to Reeds Lake Boulevard.

Option 2 retains the parking garage and either a) creates a new street connection at Wealthy Street and the D & W lot or b) at Wealthy Street and Bagley.

Option 3 also retains the deck and a) connects at Bagley or across from the school at Wealthy or b) keeps the connection east of the parking garage. Either option may only allow space for a non-motorized connection due to the width available, and it could require reworking the existing garage ramp.

Alternative alignments are shown on the following page.

Existing Condition



Option 1



Option 2A



Option 2B



Option 3A



Option 3B



Proposed Pathway Perspective



Action and Implementation

An important part of the Master Plan document is translating goals and objectives into actions. This chapter serves as guide to achieving the goals articulated by the community. Each action varies in scope, budget, time frame and impact. However, all actions require financial or resource investment from the City and will need political consensus and strong partnerships from residents, businesses, institutions and community organizations.

COMMITMENT AND LEADERSHIP

A successful action plan starts with committed city leadership. This will include the Mayor, City Commission, Planning Commission, staff, and other relevant boards and committees.

Leadership may also take form beyond the scope of the City. Implementation will be most effective when business owners, real estate developers, community organizations and residents also spearhead initiative and partner alongside the City and with each other.

CONSISTENCY WITH FUTURE EFFORTS

The Master Plan is intended to be the basis for future planning and development efforts and should be routinely used and checked as public and private development projects move forward.

PARTNERSHIPS

As mentioned, strategic partnerships are essential to the Plan's implementation. Partnerships can support and expand the reach of Plan implementation such as community engagement, ongoing maintenance, and investments. Examples of critical partnerships include:

- ▶ East Grand Rapids Public Schools
- ▶ Gaslight Village Property and Business Owners
- ▶ Spectrum Health Blodgett Campus
- ▶ Adjacent cities and townships
- ▶ Grand Valley Metro Council
- ▶ The RAPID Transit Authority

Economic Development Actions

The City of East Grand Rapids is aware of the evolving nature of local economic development in the context of changing technology and consumer preferences and understands that Gaslight Village is the core of the hyper-local business economy.

To maintain Gaslight Village as a viable local business district, several initiatives in addition to the Land Use and Transportation Plans can help its long term attractiveness and sustainability.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Gaslight Village has been a focus of the City's infrastructure investment. Since the 1999 Master Plan, major capital projects have included a new streetscape along Wealthy Street, a sidewalk snowmelt system, better defined on-street parking, utility infrastructure improvements and intersection traffic signal improvements. Similarly, the private sector has invested in several new buildings and businesses.

To date, the City has tapped its general, utilities and street funds for the capital improvements in Gaslight Village. The City's website also provides information about the City and Gaslight specifically to help gain interest by perspective business operators. The City is currently an active partner with the Gaslight Village Business Association and contributes financially through membership and funding a significant portion of a part-time communications specialist to assist with website and social media content and marketing.

During the Master Plan process, there were discussions regarding alternative options to fund and operate various functions that are currently being provided for by the City with the defined focused areas of financing capital projects and operations.

If the community determines that specific needs exist that are not currently met or should be met in different ways, the City may consider exploration of applicable economic development tools that are available in the State of Michigan.

The City could specifically consider tax increment financing (TIF) tools:

- ▶ Downtown Development Authority (DDA)- this is the most common and is used by many downtowns throughout Michigan. A DDA halts property value deterioration, increases property tax valuation, and promotes economic development.
- ▶ Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA)- These sometimes include more than one municipality along a corridor to redevelop and promote economic growth along a commercial thoroughfare.
- ▶ Neighborhood Improvement Authority (NIA)- is created to redevelop a commercial corridor in certain residential neighborhoods.
- ▶ While not a TIF tool, the City could also explore a Business Improvement District (BID) or Business Improvement Zone which provide improvements to a combination of public right-of-way including streetscapes, sidewalks, highways, and operations.
- ▶ For a full list of financing options, East Grand Rapids can explore the *Michigan Municipal League's "Economic Development Tools – Financing Tools" Fact Sheet*.

Other Funding Programs

Recommendations in this Master Plan may be funded by a variety of sources. The City's annual budget for Capital Improvements and programs is a major source. Priorities in this Plan will be considered as the City's annual budget is considered by the City Commission. Some, especially the proposed redevelopment in Gaslight Village, would take action by the private sector.

The City could support those redevelopments through capital projects in the public right-of-way. One reason for the City to keep its Plans up-to-date is to be eligible for outside funding. There are several regional and state agencies and programs that could be tapped to help fund certain recommendations, some of which require projects submitted for grant assistance be identified in the adopted City's plan.

One example is the Michigan Department of National Resources grants for Parks and Recreation projects. Every five years the City updates its Parks and Recreation Master Plan to be eligible for those funds. State grants have been used for several projects such as the pathway around parts of Reeds Lake.

Another source of funds is through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). To be eligible for MEDC funds, the City would need to be certified under its Redevelopment Ready program. Criteria for that program includes factors such as an up-to-date Master Plan, zoning that supports the Master Plan, efficient development review procedures and a marketing plan. This Master Plan was developed in part to help the City meet the MEDC criteria.

Zoning Plan

Because the future land use map is a long range vision of how land uses should evolve over time, it should not be confused with the City's zoning map, which is a short-term mechanism for regulating development. Therefore, not all properties should be immediately rezoned to correspond to the Plan. In addition, the future land use plan is generalized. More detailed evaluation would be required as part of the any rezoning consideration.

The Zoning Plan set forth in this Master Plan is based on land use categories and corresponding zoning categories. The Zoning Chart in this section shows the relationship between the future land use plan and zoning category.

Zoning changes in accordance with the Plan should be made gradually so that change can be managed. Once the Plan is adopted, the Planning Commission should review the list of suggested zoning changes and determine which ones the City should initiate and which should await a request for rezoning by the property owner. In review of rezoning and development proposals, the City should consider the following sequencing:

- ▶ Any rezoning or development proposal should be compatible with the Master Plan and not harm the quality of existing land uses.
- ▶ There must be sufficient public infrastructure to accommodate any proposed development, or the types of uses that would be allowed under the requested zoning change. This includes sufficient sewer and water capacity, transportation improvements (determined by a traffic impact study) and all other necessary infrastructure improvements necessary within this development.

- ▶ The environmental conditions of the site should accommodate the types of development or potential uses allowed within a zoning change. The impact to natural features should be minimized to the maximum extent possible.
- ▶ Rezoning should be linked as closely as possible to the timing of development and land use change. Premature rezoning without a specific development proposal and site plan should be avoided to minimize land use conflicts, property value decline, and maintenance and safety problems.
- ▶ Sites proposed for rezoning to accommodate change in land use need to have sufficient width and area to facilitate development that satisfies design guidelines of this plan, requirements of the zoning ordinance, and not create odd parcel configurations.

This Plan support the following changes to the zoning ordinance text and zoning map:

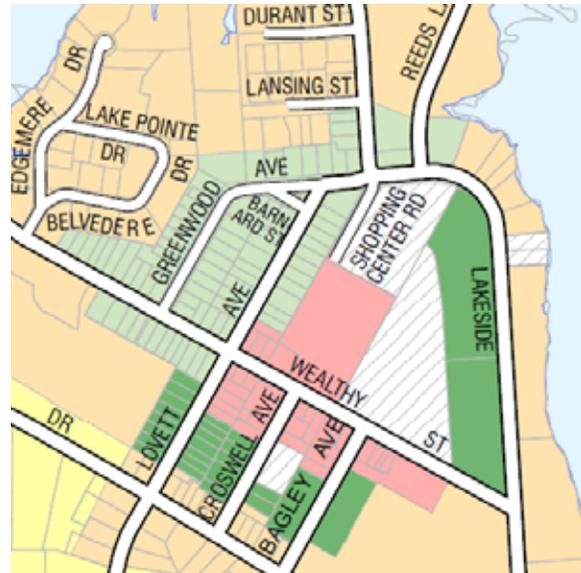
- ▶ Relax 'retail only' standards in the Gaslight Village commercial zoned district to allow for professional and office use as well
 - Office space and professional spaces should still maintain storefront facades and maintain aesthetics that contribute to the historic, small business character of Gaslight Village.
 - Other high-pedestrian uses could be considered for the area that are not currently included as permissible uses in the C-1 commercial district including cell phone service providers, outpatient medical service and urgent care facilities, imaging centers, hotels, bed and breakfasts, consumer goods rental, veterinary services, sports and recreation instructions and facilities, temporary employment services and training and diet and weight reducing centers.

- ▶ Expand the multi-family attached residential zone in Gaslight Village.
 - Expanding the areas where attached residential units will be considered to include certain lots along Lake Drive, Wealthy west of Lovett, and Lovett north of Wealthy is recommended on the map.
 - Attached residential buildings should be designed to be complementary to the neighborhood.
 - Specifically, attached residential units should be developed using materials and aesthetic designs that complement the character of the neighborhood, including the single-family homes that remain.

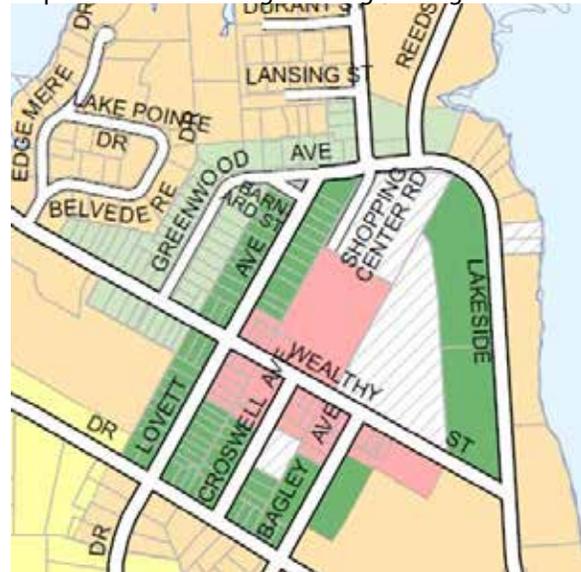
- ▶ Reduce the front yard setback or overall lot size of R-3 single-family or MFR lots to allow for more homes per block.
 - Allowance of smaller lot sizes, such as allowing five lots where four exist today, would be consistent with the Plan. A more dramatic change to even smaller lots would need to consider the size of the properties included and the relationship to adjacent single-family homes. The City should first undertake an analysis of the feasibility to meet these types of standards before any change to zoning is contemplated.
 - In addition to a zoning change to allow attached residential within this area, the city could consider a reduction of the 25-foot front yard setback currently required. This could be considered especially of the attached residential that begins on a corner, or includes at least three lots with design considerations for compatibility with the front setback of adjacent homes. In such cases, the City should consider changing the setback provisions in MFR to use a front-yard average similar to other zoning districts.

- A reduction in the side yard setback may be reasonable in some cases, but should be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Both the minimum building separation required by the fire code, drainage, and the views from the adjacent buildings should be considered

Current Zoning in Gaslight Village



Proposed Future Zoning in Gaslight Village



Zoning And Land Use Correlation Table

This table is to show the correlation between existing and proposed zoning and the corresponding land use categories shown in the Plan

	Single Family	Attached Residential	Institutional	Healthcare Campus	Mixed Use	Commercial
R-1 (Lot Area: 12,000 sq. ft)						
R-2 (Lot Area: 7,200 sq. ft.)						
R-3 (Lot area: 5,000 sq. ft)						
MFR						
C-1 Commercial						
PUD*						

*Planned Use Development (PUD) are designations use for specific planned developments on a site-specific basis

Action Table

Various sections of the Master Plan include a series of recommendations. These range from new programs, to zoning ordinance or map amendments, or topics that need further study. This is a long range plan. While there was broad support for the recommendations, priorities also need to be established to fit within the funding available, and the time involved by City officials and staff. The table below summarizes the recommendations described in various sections of the Master Plan. The timing and priorities shown are based on several factors including the urgency or priorities expressed by City officials and the public during the Master Plan process. In some cases, the Planning Commission will need further input or funding approved by the City Commission. It is intended that the Planning Commission use this table as a guide to set annual priorities and monitor progress. Annually, the Planning Commission could adjust the priorities based on funding available, new opportunities or issues that arise, or other factors.

City-Wide	
Phase: Short-term (1-3 YEARS)	
PROJECT TYPE: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	KEY RESPONSIBILITY*
Invest in transit stop amenities such as pleasant bus stops with a place to wait or sit, conveniently located near destinations, connections to the sidewalk system, and real time bus arrival and routing information.	Rapid
Provide covered bicycle parking near transit stops and major destinations.	Rapid, Private
Implement a wayfinding system for bicycles, pedestrians, and transit across the City and to improve public access to Reeds Lake.	Staff
PROJECT TYPE: POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS	KEY RESPONSIBILITY*
Prepare a city-wide mobility plan focused on ways to improve safety and travel for pedestrians and bicyclists.	P.C., Staff
Consider pursuing being certified as a Michigan Economic Development Corporation "Redevelopment Ready Community" to make the City eligible for certain state funding.	Staff, C.C.
Coordinate future updates of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan with the goals and recommendations of this Master Plan.	Staff
Continue to monitor special funding opportunities for transportation capital improvements, including partnerships with other agencies and municipalities.	Staff
Phase: Mid-term (3-5 YEARS)	
PROJECT TYPE: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	KEY RESPONSIBILITY*
Implement recommendations of the mobility plan.	Staff
Create transportation demand management strategies to encourage bicycle, pedestrian, and transit as an alternative to single-occupant vehicles for residents and employees in East Grand Rapids.	Staff, Rapid
Phase: Long-term (5+ YEARS)	
PROJECT TYPE: POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	KEY RESPONSIBILITY*
Create regulatory opportunity to ensure residential and related land uses provide enough parking for its users based on changes in mobility, such as carshare and autonomous vehicles.	P.C.
Update Master Plan..	P.C., C.C.

* P.C. = Planning Commission
 C.C.= City Commission
 Staff= City Administration and Staff

GVBA= Gaslight Village Business Association
 Private=Private property owners and developers
 Rapid= The Rapid Transit Agency

Gaslight Village	
Phase: Short term (1-3 YEARS)	
PROJECT TYPE: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	KEY RESPONSIBILITY*
Add on-street parking spaces by using paint striping to distinguish specific parking spaces.	Staff
PROJECT TYPE: POLICIES AND PROGRAM	KEY RESPONSIBILITY*
Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for an expanded table of uses for C-1 commercial district and definition of retail, especially for high pedestrian uses including opportunity for office space and hotel land use.	P.C., C.C.
Amend the Zoning Map and text to allow multiple-family residential in certain additional locations as shown on the Future Land Use Map of Gaslight Village..	P.C., C.C.
Review the recommended changes to the Zoning Ordinance and Map and determine which changes the city should initiate, rather than wait for requests by property owners.	P.C.
Consider economic development and tax increment financing tools to help stimulate redevelopment.	C.C., Admin
Conduct parking occupancy counts in Gaslight Village to identify if changes to supply or management are needed.	Staff
Phase: Mid-term (3-5 YEARS)	
PROJECT TYPE: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS	KEY RESPONSIBILITY*
Improve/add bicycle lanes and pedestrian crossings in the Gaslight Village (could be part of Mobility Plan).	P.C., C.C.
Create marketing materials and have an 'open house' for business and property owners, and perspective developers to showcase the Gaslight Village plan and opportunities.	Admin, GVBA
Implement a wayfinding system for parking in and near Gaslight Village.	Staff
Create a pop-up activity space in Gaslight Village.	Staff, Private
Add pedestrian link from Wealthy north to Reeds Lake.	Staff, Private
Revise parking management and regulations in Gaslight Village to improve parking efficiency, which can include valet parking, shared parking agreements, time limits, or charging for parking on the key blocks.	Staff, GVBA
Work with property owners and developers toward additional mixed-use in Gaslight Village, which could include a office space, a hotel, restaurants, or residential as described and illustrated in the Plan.	Staff, Private
Enhance the sense of arrival in Gaslight Village at the western entry on Wealthy Street through urban design and development.	TBD

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