

Overview of Equity in the Strategic Plan

To access the City's full Strategic Plan, please click [here](#).

Equity Statement

"...Racial inequities have been baked into government, and ... racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive. We also know that other groups of people are still marginalized, including based on gender identity, sexual orientation, ability and age, to name but a few. Focusing on racial equity provides the opportunity to introduce a framework, tools and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization." (2019, Government Alliance on Race and Equity)

The City of Grand Rapids is dedicated to advancing equitable outcomes and opportunities by leading with racial equity to address root causes of disparities. The City defines equity as the condition achieved when people have the tools, resources and connections necessary to be fully engaged and prepared to benefit from the opportunities they seek. Racial equity is achieved when one's race or ethnicity does not determine, in a statistical sense, how one experiences opportunity, power and life outcomes.

This targeted approach on racial equity will advance our universal goal of elevating quality of life in Grand Rapids. Equity is one of the City's six values and must be embedded into all of our decisions, policies and practices. In an effort to dismantle the systemic and institutional injustice that has been prevalent throughout our history, the City has made the conscious choice to highlight equity in each priority area of our strategic plan.

The first objective in this plan outlines the City's commitment to creating a structure within City operations to lift up racial equity throughout the organization so that each department has the knowledge, skills and support to intentionally remove and prevent barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice.

Additionally, to the extent possible, all plan metrics will be disaggregated by race and ethnicity, and when needed as a proxy, by geography (Census tracts, Wards, etc). This statement is an urgent call to action to transform government to achieve positive and sustainable community level impact.

The City of Grand Rapids centers racial equity so that the recognition listed on page four of this document will be the lived reality of all Grand Rapids residents, regardless of race or ethnicity. When we read those rankings and recognitions, we must always ensure Grand Rapids is the "Best Place to Retire" and "Most Affordable City for Business Professionals to Live and Work" for everyone who calls Grand Rapids home. We must be mindful of the areas that require improvement such as being ranked 122nd in U.S. for Hispanic Entrepreneurs (2018, WalletHub), 2nd Worst for African Americans Economically (2015, Forbes) and 39th for Residential Segregation (2018, Apartment List).

We are fully aware of the challenges and opportunities before us as we lead with equity. We also know that as a municipality, we are uniquely positioned to reduce disparities through policy, intentional practices, transparency and accountability. The City, in partnership with organizational allies and community, can help make Grand Rapids truly the "Best Place to Live in the U.S." for everyone.

Leading With Equity

Our values are what we stand for. They are embedded throughout the entire Strategic Plan and guide *all* City work, including that of the Affordable Housing Fund board. The action oriented definition of equity as our value includes being intentional with our actions. Part of this means being systemically and historically aware of how we arrived to the inequities we see today and being pro-active to make anti-racist and anti-oppressive policies and decisions.

Equity: Leveraging City influence to **intentionally** remove and prevent barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice.

Values

Our values are what we stand for. They are embedded throughout the entire plan and guide all City work.

Accountability	Always acting with integrity and transparency and being responsible for what we do and say.
Collaboration	Working together in partnership with others; teamwork.
Customer Service	Professionally serving those who live in, work in or visit the city. Providing respectful, excellent, high quality service and assistance before, during and after the person's interactions with the City.
Equity	Leveraging City influence to intentionally remove and prevent barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice.
Innovation	Challenging how things have been done before. Fulfilling community needs by offering new ways to serve our customers and enhance operations. Being nimble, self-aware and open to feedback.
Sustainability	The ability to be maintained; making decisions with an understanding of how those decisions will impact the environment, people and communities, and finances, both today and in the future

Our Vision is an aspirational goal we have for the Grand Rapids community. Our vision statement below leads with equity intentionally to center this desired approach to our work, as well as being the outcome of this work.

Vision

Grand Rapids will be nationally recognized as an equitable, welcoming, innovative and collaborative city with a robust economy, safe and healthy community, and the opportunity for a high quality of life for all.

Our Mission is how we, the City of Grand Rapids, contributes to the vision. We strive to elevate quality of life through excellent City services. It is important to note that to be excellent, our services must also be equitable. As a community, we cannot say we are fully excellent, when so many of our residents continue to endure inequities, and systemic racism is impacting each aspect of our lives.

Mission

To elevate quality of life through excellent City services.

Our Priorities are six categories of City Strategic Plan objectives and strategies to achieve our mission and vision. Embedded in each is a theme of equity, either directly as underlined below or within the approach to the work.

Priorities



Governmental Excellence

A fiscally resilient government powered by high performing and knowledgeable staff equipped with the appropriate tools and resources to offer excellent, equitable and innovative public service.



Economic Prosperity and Affordability

Residents, employees and businesses have pathways to financial growth and security.



Engaged and Connected Community

Residents and stakeholders have awareness of and voice in decisions that affect them, and receive culturally-responsive and proactive communication.



Health and Environment

The health of all people and the environment are advocated for, protected and enhanced.



Mobility

Innovative, efficient and equitable mobility solutions are safe, affordable and convenient to the community.



Safe Community

All people feel safe and are safe at all times throughout our community.

Our First Objective is to embed equity throughout government operations. We were intentional to lead with equity as our very first objective to symbolize and model that equity must be centered in our work from the beginning. As the Affordable Housing Fund Board does its work, please note that per strategy #2 listed below, all data, to the extent possible, must be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender identity, and geography. This is a small, yet foundational step, to embedding equity. As you listen to presenters, look at, collect and report out data – we ask that you require data be disaggregated.

Objective 1: Embed equity throughout government operations.

Strategies

1. Create infrastructure to elevate and organize equity work within the City and investments in Neighborhoods of Focus
2. Disaggregate all data, to the extent possible, by race, ethnicity, gender identity and geography
3. Evaluate the racial equity impacts of major policy proposals and initiatives and of existing projects and services
4. Require all departments to apply a racial equity lens to budgetary requests
5. Identify systemic issues that cause disparate outcomes in the justice system and implement strategies to address those issues within the City's span of influence

Collecting Demographics is important and to support data collection, the City has a Demographics Statement to offer guidance on how to collect such information. Depending on the situation, additional information may be useful, such as number of years living in Grand Rapids when trying to connect with long-term residents. **To access the City's Demographics Statement guide, please click [here](#).**