



# **Update on Wildlife Management in the City of Grand Rapids**

**Public Safety Committee  
12/17/24**



# Deer Management Background



Grand Rapids values our shared ecosystem with all urban wildlife, including deer. We aim for coexistence in a way that balances safety, preservation of the natural environment and protection of the built environment. Our commitment is to be a sustainable city where residents and urban wildlife can live together.

Over the past two years, Grand Rapids has been collaborating with regional partners and the Public Safety Committee to determine the best path forward, given Kent County's burgeoning deer population and increased risks to property, safety, and the health of the deer population itself.

# Deer Management Background



At our last meeting, we presented an option to both Public Safety Committee and City Commission for a limited pilot program for archery-only deer hunting on public property at 960 Bristol Ave. NW, which is currently undeveloped land owned by Parks & Recreation. Both public bodies encouraged moving forward with that option.

Since that time, staff has been working on public engagement and logistics to determine next steps, and **based on what we've learned intend to defer any hunt on publicly-owned property until the fall of 2025.**

# Update on Pilot Initiative

- Opened public engagement page and held community meeting on 12/2
  - Included potential partner (Michigan National Deer Association) in meeting to answer questions and address concerns
  - While the majority of in-person attendees were supportive of the initiative (13 in support and 1 opposed), online feedback was majority negative, or posed more questions and concerns than support (75% did not believe it would be beneficial)
- Since that time, additional feedback has been received from the neighborhood that indicates a lack of community support, or at least a lack of support without a significant level of additional engagement and education
  - 53 nearby residents submitted a petition against the initiative, representing 39 households immediately adjacent or across the street from the property
  - Of the parcels immediately adjacent to 960 Bristol, 42% opposed the pilot archery deer hunt (18 of 43 households)
- Staff did explore working with an adjacent private property owner, but the owner indicated they would only participate if the City was participating as well.

# Moving forward

- Based on community feedback, and in consultation with the Parks & Recreation Director, **staff does not intend to move forward with the initiative for January 2025**
- Additional time will allow for more meaningful engagement and education, and will allow for the benefit of additional data and research from the countywide study
- In the interim, staff will focus on educating residents about options on private property and on gaining additional insight that might inform a future hunt on public land. We expect to continue working with MNDA on those efforts.

# Questions and Comments