

# City Commission High Level Briefing #2

October 8, 2024



CITY OF  
GRAND  
RAPIDS

**BRIDGE TO  
OUR FUTURE**

GRAND RAPIDS  
COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN

# Agenda

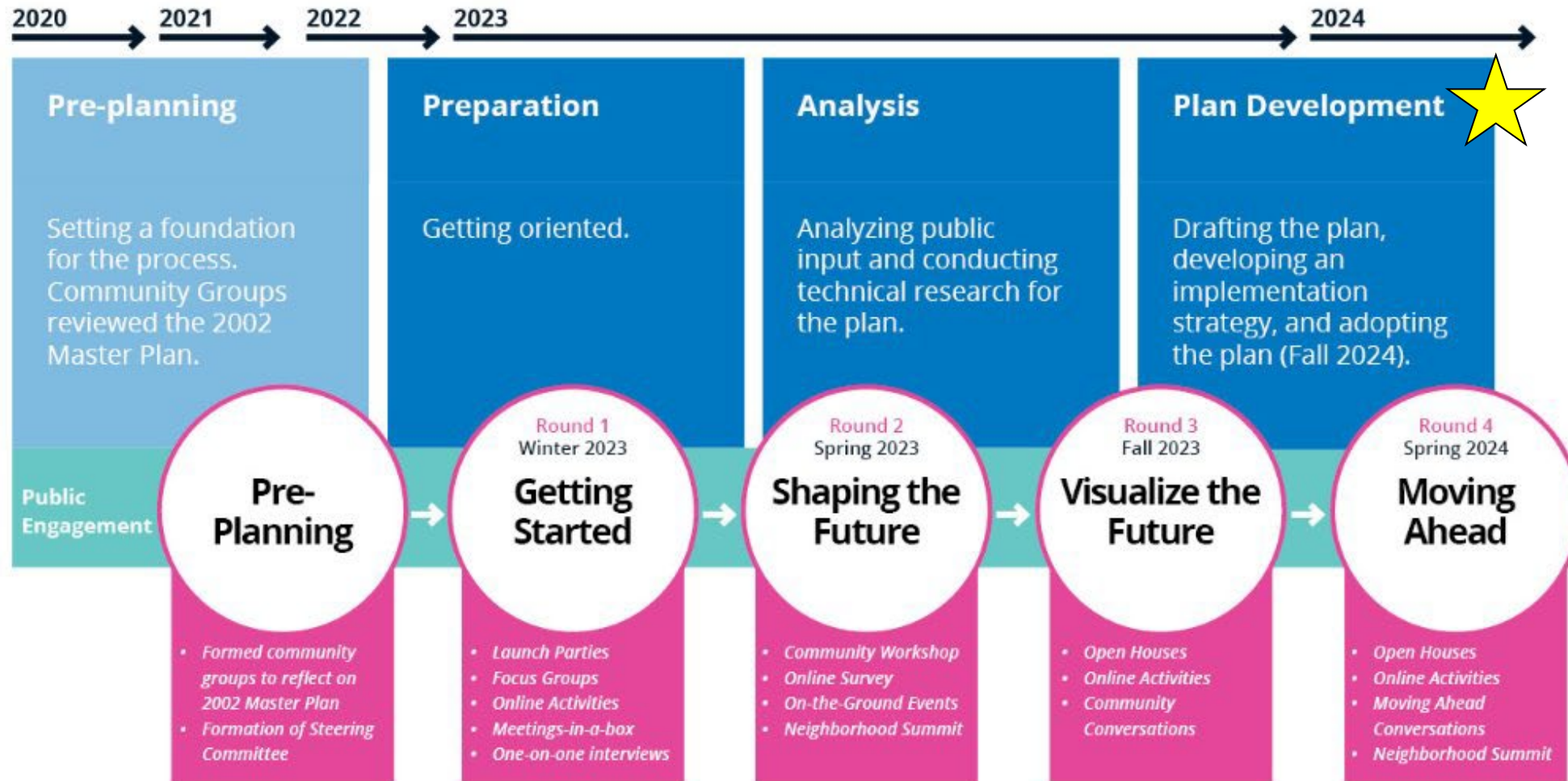
- **CMP Overview**
- **CMP Remaining Chapters**
  - *Chapter 5: Desirable Development Character*
  - *Creston ASP*
  - *Butterworth ASP*
  - *Southtown Neighborhoods ASP*
  - *Planning Commission Comments*
- **Adoption Process Timeline**

# CMP Overview

# What is a Community Master Plan (CMP)?

- 1. The blueprint for how a community grows and evolves set forth by the Planning Commission and adopted by City Commission**
- 2. Builds community pride and defines a long-range vision for the future, typically 20 years**
- 3. Describes the desired physical development of the community**
- 4. Addresses topics such as population, economy, housing, transportation, facilities, and land use**
- 5. Integrates solid technical analysis with robust public input**
- 6. Necessary for a valid Zoning Ordinance, which brings the Plan to life for the community**

# CMP Process Timeline



# Plan Framework

## COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

### In the next 20 years...

Grand Rapids aspires to build a sustainable city of inclusion, where people in all neighborhoods have the opportunity to live in safe and affordable housing, to move throughout the city in a variety of ways, to earn a living wage through meaningful job choices, and to gather together in vibrant spaces that celebrate our unique cultures and histories.

The vision is an expression of the community's future and was tested in Round 2 of public engagement.

## COMMUNITY VALUE THREADS



**Equity:** Where all residents have access to resources that allow for opportunity, influence, and positive life outcomes no matter their starting point.



**Safety:** Where all people are secure and protected in all communities no matter where they live or come from, or what they look like.



**Vibrancy:** A variety of amenities, including arts, culture, and recreation opportunities, that activate and contribute to the energy of the city year-round.



**Culture:** Traditions and experiences that originate from one's background and lived experiences and can be shared and celebrated with others.



**Sustainability:** Balancing growth, environmental stewardship, and well-being in a way that fulfills current and ongoing needs and opportunities of future generations.

Values reflect, at a high level, what the community cares about. The value threads are woven throughout the plan chapters.

## COMMUNITY GOAL AREAS

- 1. Great Neighborhoods:** Connected and diverse neighborhoods where residents can thrive. Grand Rapids neighborhoods will have access to housing, retail, open space, and more that meet the needs of residents in all phases of life.
- 2. Vital Business Districts:** A network of unique and diverse businesses in all neighborhoods. Vital business districts will provide a variety of products, services, amenities, and safe, walkable places that attract people.
- 3. A Strong Economy:** An economy that offers a prosperous quality of life. The Grand Rapids economy will offer a range of employers and job choices so that everyone can access and earn a living wage.
- 4. Balanced Mobility:** A transportation network that is safe, reliable, and affordable. Grand Rapids will have mobility options that include a variety of ways to move about the city and beyond.
- 5. Development Character:** A strong sense of place through high quality design. New development will improve or support the existing fabric of each neighborhood.

Goals are desired outcomes expressed in simple terms. Each goal area is a chapter of the plan.

## OBJECTIVES

Objectives are strategic direction that organizes the recommendations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations include projects, policies, and programs to achieve desired outcomes.

# Chapter 5 and Area Specific Plans

# Desirable Development Character

This chapter provides guidance on the physical development of Grand Rapids.

- Development Principles
- Conceptual Development Framework
- Future Character and Land Use Map
- Future Character Types
- Design Guidelines

## Chapter 5





# Desirable Development Character

## Development Principles

- Describe the intent about “how” and “where” growth and development in Grand Rapids should occur.
- Provide additional guidance for desired development outcomes and reflect a variety of themes that include the quality, appearance, pattern, and character of development.
- Are supported by the Future Character Map, which depicts the locations where certain concepts apply through character types

## Chapter 5

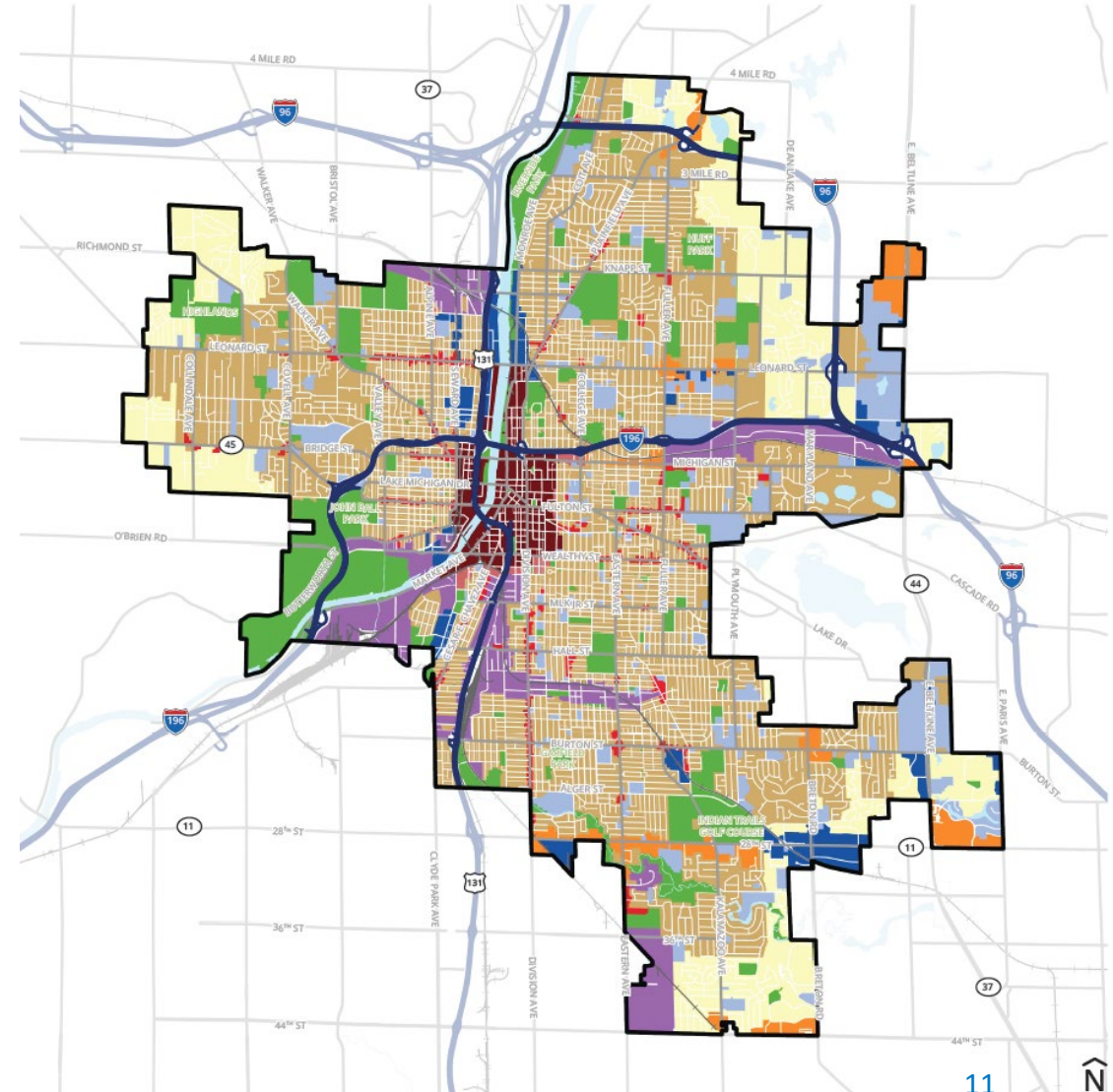




# Desirable Development Character

## Future Character and Land Use Map

- *Downtown*
- *Transitional Activity Center*
- *Community Activity Center*
- *Neighborhood Center*
- *Manufacturing & Logistics*
- *Innovation Center*
- *Compact Neighborhood*
- *Suburban Neighborhood*
- *Campus*
- *Parks and Open Space*



# Desirable Development Character

## Design Guidelines

**Compatible:** *Build on the context of the place and advance the vision of an applicable Area Specific Plan.*

1. Build on the local identity and aspiration of the place (site, block, or neighborhood).
2. Relate to the local architectural and development patterns.

**Pedestrian Oriented:** *Contribute to an active and inclusive public realm.*

3. Provide transitions from public to private spaces.
4. Provide usable spaces for social interaction.
5. Minimize the impact of parking areas and utilities.

**High Quality:** *Design resilient and visually interesting buildings.*

6. Carry out a clear design idea.
7. Utilize resilient, sustainable, and durable materials.
8. Integrate features that create visual interest.

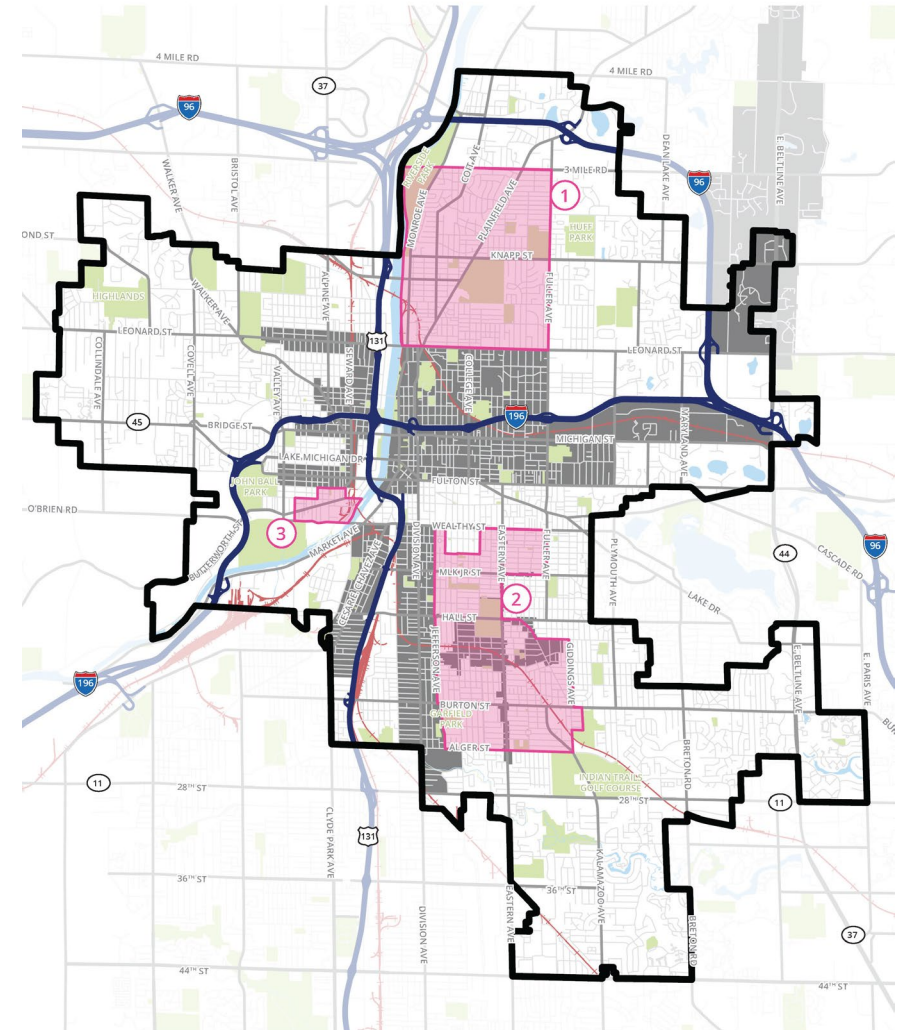
## Chapter 5



# Area Specific Plans (ASP)

This chapter provides an overview of the three ASPs to be adopted with the Community Master Plan.

- An Area Specific Plan (ASP) is a neighborhood-specific framework intended to guide future improvements and investments in areas such as land use, zoning, transportation, and neighborhood character
- To date, the City has completed 11 ASPs
- Three additional ASPs will be adopted in conjunction with the Community Master Plan (CMP):
  1. Creston
  2. Southtown Neighborhoods
  3. Butterworth



# Creston ASP

## Area Specific Plan

### Goal 01: Affordable & Inclusive Growth

- *Allow for denser housing on key corridors, allow for a variety of housing types in single-family districts, support existing homeowners and renters*

### Goal 02: A Lively & Unique Neighborhood

- *Redevelop the riverfront as an innovation center, support Plainfield Avenue with new mixed-use development, target storefront and facade repairs in neighborhood nodes and subdistricts*

### Goal 03: Safer Streets for Bicycling & Walking

- *Improve pedestrian and bicycling connections on Plainfield Avenue, add bicycle infrastructure throughout the neighborhood*

### Goal 04: Revitalized & Connected Open Spaces

- *Create a plaza where Coit Avenue meets Plainfield Avenue, better connect Plainfield Avenue to the riverfront along key streets, work to complete grand river trail through neighborhood, focus on greening residential portions of Plainfield Avenue, establish community vision for redeveloped Riverside Middle School, boost Creston's climate resilience*



# Southtown Neighborhoods ASP

## Goal 01: Development Without Displacement

- *Explore partnerships to build affordable housing on underutilized properties, support and expand a community land trust, allow for denser housing on key corridors, allow for a variety of housing types in single family districts, encourage accessory dwelling units (ADU) within the neighborhood*

## Goal 02: A Community Built by All, For All

- *Promote home repair programs, preserve existing affordable housing, develop mechanisms to protect residents from displacement, create pathways for residents to provide input on new development, support resident-led small-scale development*

## Goal 03: Preserve Local Culture

- *Support neighborhood nodes with new mixed-use development, support improvements to bicycle facilities, transit facilities, and pedestrian crossings, implement design guidelines for large lot infill that builds, upon existing development regulations, identify vacant lots that may be activated as green space*



Area Specific  
Plan

# Butterworth ASP

## Goal 01: Sustainable, Equitable Development

- *Allow for denser housing on key corridors, allow for a variety of housing types in single family districts, support existing homeowners and renters*

## Goal 02: A Vibrant & Thriving Business Community

- *Redevelop the riverfront as an innovation center, adaptive reuse of existing buildings with an art/maker focus, support Butterworth Street as a neighborhood-serving commercial corridor*

## Goal 03: Safer, Walkable & Bikeable Streets

- *Improve Butterworth for pedestrians and bicyclists, develop alleys as an alternative pedestrian network and community space, improve existing trail and bicycle connections within neighborhood*

## Goal 04: Beautiful Neighborhoods & Healthy, Active Community Spaces

- *Explore additional programming and ongoing stewardship of Westown Commons Park, identify new public space opportunities in the neighborhood, increase the tree canopy as the innovation center develops*

## Area Specific Plan





# Planning Commission Comments

- **Development Principles**
- **Conceptual Development Framework**
  - *Add methodology for determining nodes*
- **Future Character and Land Use Map**
  - *Revise character types along corridors to better reinforce nodes*
- **Future Character Types**
  - *Add direction for tree canopy to “Innovation Centers”*
  - *Consider a higher threshold for “Campus” to encourage contextual reuse*
  - *Remove private golf courses from “Parks & Open Space” and review parks along the river*
- **Design Guidelines**

## Chapter 5



# Adoption Process Timeline

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## Proposed Community Master Plan - City Commission and Planning Commission Meetings

(Schedule is tentative and subject to change pending the actions of the PC and CC.)



# Adoption Process Timeline Details

## NOVEMBER

**12**  
TUE City Commission  
Sets Public  
Hearing

**19**  
TUE City Commission  
Holds Public  
Hearing

## DECEMBER

**3**  
TUE City Commission  
Adopts

**17**  
TUE City Commission  
Adopts (back-up)

- Nov. 12: Presentation on process and plan organization at Committee of the Whole. Opportunity for City Commission to ask questions.
- Nov. 19: Presentation about plan content at night meeting prior to the public hearing.

# Questions?



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